

Plate 1

Joseph Booth

**JOSEPH BOOTH, 1892-1919: An Evaluation of his Life, Thought and Influence on Religion and Politics with Particular Reference to British Central Africa (Malawi) and South Africa**

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by

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

In this dissertation we attempt to assess Booth's life and thought and the influence he exerted in the religious and political history of Central and Southern Africa. Since 1958, when George Shepperson and Thomas Price brought Joseph Booth to the attention of the academic world for the first time, controversy about Booth has continued but there has not yet appeared a major study of his life. This research work is designed to fill this gap, at least partially.

The thesis we wish to assert is that although Booth was often deeply involved in doctrinal issues relating to missions, the Sabbath and to a lesser degree, the millennium, it was 'Africa for the African' that was constantly the centre of his attention to the end of his life. Indeed this theme of 'Africa for the Africans' undergirded virtually all his religious and political activities. This belief was grounded in his simple faith as to what was the clear message of the Bible about justice.

Starting with the historical context, Chapter I deals briefly with the state and development of religion and politics in South Africa and British Central Africa (Malawi) in the 1890s. The purpose is to examine the socio-political setting which helped to shape Booth's missionary work.

Chapter II sketches his life and career to provide a general background to the study of the major themes in his religious and political thought. Chapters III and IV examine in detail his

fundamental religious views. It appears that in this area, Booth's approach to Scripture and its interpretation was very close to that of the sixteenth century radicals, the Anabaptists.

Chapter V traces the emergence of Watch Tower Millenarianism in Central and South Africa. This section demonstrates that although Booth cannot be seen as a direct founder of the sect, his role nonetheless was not without significance. The men who took the central stage in the development of the movement were a number of his proteges, particularly Elliot Kamwana through whom an African version of the Watch Tower teaching spread in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In Chapters VI and VII, an attempt is made to describe and analyze his 'Africa for the African' doctrine and show it as a precursor of modern Black Theology of Liberation. The slogan 'Africa for the African' is again assessed to show Booth's role in relation to African nationalism.

The dissertation concludes with a case study regarding Booth and the MI5 and the implications that resulted from his pro-African stance, especially as it related to the Defence of the Realm Act 1914, Regulation 14B. The interest taken in him by the British security authorities, together with Booth's advancing years, rapidly curtailed his activities. This did not come, however, before Booth had left a permanent mark on the religious and political history of South and Central Africa.

**DEDICATED**

**IN HONOUR OF**

**PROFESSOR EMERITUS G. A. SHEPPERSON**

**for the great inspiration he has been to me personally, including many other students he has supervised over the years, especially in the Commonwealth and American History Department of the University of Edinburgh.**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks, and all the sources of information have been duly acknowledged.

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Finally, however, I alone am responsible for any shortcomings in this thesis.

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**A TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ABFMS	-	The American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society
AEF	-	Africa Evangelical Fellowship
ACU	-	African Christian Union
ALC	-	African Lakes Company
AMEC	-	African Methodist Episcopal Church
AMTC	-	African Missions Trading Company
ANC	-	African National Congress
APO	-	African Political Organization
AUSS	-	Andrews University Seminary Studies
BCA	-	British Central Africa
BIMS	-	Baptist Industrial Mission of Scotland
BM	-	Blantyre Mission
CMS	-	Church Missionary Society
CO	-	Colonial Office
DRC	-	Dutch Reformed Church
EUML	-	Edinburgh University Main Library
FMC	-	Foreign Mission Committee
HO	-	Home Office
ICS	-	International Correspondence School
IM	-	Industrial Mission
KAR	-	King's African Rifles
LMS	-	London Missionary Society
NANC	-	Nyasaland African National Congress
NBC	-	National Baptist Convention
NPNF	-	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NIM	-	Nyasa Industrial Mission
NLS	-	National Library of Scotland
NVR	-	Nyasaland Volunteer Reserve

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OFS	-	Orange Free State
PEA	-	Portuguese East Africa
PIM	-	Providence Industrial Mission
PRO	-	Public Record Office
RC	-	Roman Catholic
RM	-	Resident Magistrate
SANAC	-	South African Native Affairs Commission
SANNC	-	South African Native National Congress
SDA	-	Seventh-day Adventist
SDB	-	Seventh Day Baptist
SEIA	-	Seventh Day Evangelizing and Industrial Association
SNA	-	Secretary for Native Affairs
UMCA	-	Universities Mission to Central Africa
WSM	-	Weston-Super-Mare
ZIM	-	Zambezi Industrial Mission

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**CHANGE OF NAMES AND THE CORRECT SPELLING OF AFRICAN WORDS**

Basutoland	-	Lesotho
British Central Africa	-	Nyasaland Protectorate
Nyasaland Protectorate	-	Malawi
Southern Rhodesia	-	Zimbabwe
Northern Rhodesia	-	Zambia
Tanganyika	-	Tanzania
Chinteche	-	Chintheche
Mlanje	-	Mulanje
Ncheu	-	Ntcheu
Cholo	-	Thyolo

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## PREFACE

When George Shepperson and Thomas Price published their seminal biography of John Chilembwe, Independent African<sup>1</sup> in 1958, it brought to the attention of the academic world for the first time Joseph Booth, a radical British missionary and political activist. Until then almost unknown, Booth's life has since become the subject of numerous articles. His religious and political role in the history of central and southern Africa has become the subject of some controversy. However, there has not yet appeared a major study of Booth.

In recent years, Booth has been discussed sympathetically by Langworthy<sup>2</sup> and has also been dismissed with some asperity by Boeder.<sup>3</sup> The latter describes Booth as "a strange man with psycho-history full of rejection of and by himself whom George Shepperson in his biography of John Chilembwe has tried to make into a kind of second David Livingstone".<sup>4</sup> He even goes so far as to suggest that Booth's "mind was a chaos, his life a tragic footnote in Central African religious history",<sup>5</sup> and thus concludes "did more to hinder the spread of Christianity in Central Africa than help it."<sup>6</sup>

Langworthy disagrees with Boeder's simplistic assessment of Booth, arguing that he "based on limited access to some of the material takes a revisionist view, measuring rhetoric against deed and thus ends up agreeing with Booth's critics from colonial and missionary establishments".<sup>7</sup> Chakanza seems to support Langworthy's rebuttal that "Boeder's assumptions if taken to their logical conclusions - may be misleading".<sup>8</sup> In the Melville J. Herskovits Memorial lecture on Joseph Booth and the Africanist Diaspora, Shepperson notes that "Whatever in the profoundest sense,

may have been Booth's motives in his championship of Africa and the Africans, the sacrifices he made on their behalf are undoubted".<sup>9</sup> Yet even more significant is the testimony expressed by Solomon Plaatje, an eminent African Nationalist politician and leading member of the South African Native National Congress [ANC] who wrote to Booth in 1916 while in London campaigning against the Native Land Act of 1913. He said:

I must tell you that I am happy to find ... that you are in old England pleading as hard as ever for the forlorn cause of the much misunderstood African ... I have very much often asked myself what encouragement or satisfaction you can hope to get for all the discomfort that I know you have had to endure, for the sake of our Race, which is helplessly ignorant, and fettered to lend any tangible or material support.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to point out that when scholarly work started on Booth after the Second World War, Shepperson observes that "he [Booth] was remembered by many Africans in southern and central Africa".<sup>11</sup> And one of these Africans, who, in this new period of interest in Booth still remembered him, was Professor D.D.T. Jabavu, recently retired from University College, Fort Hare. He wrote to Shepperson:

I met Mr Booth off and on but sufficiently to form definite impressions namely, that he was a very vigorous fighter for the rights of Africans ... bold in fighting their cause by means of public platform address, incurring many white enemies by reason of his extreme methods and language.<sup>12</sup>

However, one sees that the amount of published works on Booth available to date is still lacking in at least two respects. In spite of Shepperson's assertion that in his view after the only contribution and assessment to have been made by scholars from the West, he notes "It is with their [African] descendants ... in the new Africa that has come into being in the generation after Booth's death, that his reputation as

an Africanist will rest".<sup>13</sup> However, no African writer has taken up the challenge to study Booth's religio-political position nor has any scholar to my knowledge related Booth's 'Africa for the African' doctrine to modern Black and liberation theologies both in Malawi and South Africa. And hence this study partially is an attempt to fill in any gap that has not hitherto been explored.

Starting with the historical context, the thesis deals briefly with the state of religion and politics in South Africa and British Central Africa in the 1890s. Its purpose is to ascertain the socio-political milieu in these countries which helped to shape the nature of Booth's mission.

His early life and career provide us with the background to the life of Joseph Booth, while the subsequent sections evaluate his fundamental religious views on mission, the Sabbath and Millenarianism. The thesis argues that Booth did develop extremely radical views on social justice and equal political rights for Africans. And so an attempt is made to describe and analyze his 'Africa for the African' doctrine and show it as a forerunner of modern Black and Liberation theologies. The slogan 'Africa for the African' is again assessed to show Booth's role in relation to African nationalism.

The thesis concludes with a case study regarding Booth and the MI5 and the implications that resulted from his pro-African stance, especially as it related to the Defence of the Realm Act, 1914, Regulation 14B. The interest taken in him by British security authorities, together with Booth's advancing years, rapidly curtailed his activities. This did not come, however, before Booth had left a permanent mark on the religious and political history of South and Central Africa.

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12. A letter from Prof. Dr D.T. Jabavu, 'Phumulong' Middledrift, Cape Town to George Shepperson, Edinburgh University, dated 31st May 1954. See also Appendix I.
13. George Shepperson, 'Joseph Booth and the African Diaspora' op. cit. p.16.

**CHAPTER I****A HISTORICAL CONTEXT:****RELIGION AND POLITICS IN BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA  
AND SOUTH AFRICA BY THE EARLY 1890s**

The African societies in British Central Africa were beginning to come under serious pressure from the impact of European expansion in the 1890s, while those of the four territories that were to make up South Africa had already been profoundly reshaped by the massive European impact upon them.

In British Central Africa the indigenous groups, some of very long-standing and others more recent arrivals, had been going through a difficult period of readjustment to each other. This had by no means been resolved when the ominous surge of European power, the 'Scramble for Africa', overtook them.

This situation of imbalance and turmoil in British Central Africa made sharper the almost inevitable tension between the races. In South Africa, the new economic developments that were leading that area into an era of industrialisation were also creating tension among the various communities.

Joseph Booth was well aware of these conflicts when he arrived in Africa and he believed that the Christian Gospel, if truly preached and acted out, could resolve them peacefully and harmoniously.

## SOUTH AFRICA - ITS BEGINNING AND SETTING

As a starting point, most historians associate the first steps toward the European annexation of South Africa with Jan van Riebeck's settlement at Table Bay in 1652.<sup>1</sup> However, Theal states that the Dutch had not "the remote intention to found a Dutch colony in South Africa".<sup>2</sup>, adding that "the object was merely to build a small fort for the protection against the native ...".<sup>3</sup> This view is supported by De Klerk in his book Puritans in Africa. He writes: "The Cape was founded neither as a colony of the United Provinces nor by conquest with the idea of opening up and developing the subcontinent".<sup>4</sup> Chirenje disputes such a notion, and argues:

Shortly after their arrival at the Cape, the whites proceeded to set up sociopolitical structures in order to make themselves the dominant group on the African subcontinent. This posture which Africans resented and resisted in many guises, had by the nineteenth century become a permanent feature of life in southern Africa. In a word, South African society had by then been shaped.<sup>5</sup>

Chirenje's view seems to be partly shared by Guelke, who acknowledges that the early white settlers formed "the nucleus of a permanent white population which grew slowly during the next two decades",<sup>6</sup> but then:

Thereafter the growth in the free population was largely due to natural increase; but many Company employees, who had often worked for freeburghers, continued to take their discharges at the Cape and reinforced the rapidly growing white population. The settler population was largely of Dutch, German and to a lesser degree, French extraction.<sup>7</sup>

The two views are not incompatible. The Dutch authorities at no time during their rule in South Africa intended to occupy any sizeable part of Africa. What they wanted was a base to aid their vital trade with the Indies. However, the gradually increasing number of whites who chose to make Africa their home and to trade and

farm were a different matter. By the middle of the eighteenth century these Burghers, or Afrikaners as some called themselves by 1800, had begun a slow steady conquest of the lands to the north and east of Cape Town.

The majority of the newcomers tended to hold a distorted if not negative view of African tribal groups. Colquhoun commented regarding the Khoi Khoi and the San: "The Hottentots are poor dejected harmless race, evidently deficient in memory. Of the Bushmen ... they are so extremely savage and ferocious, that they are incapable of being civilized".<sup>8</sup> And in general were even thought not to have "attained distinct notion of Supreme Being, or that an idea of a future state of existence had any period prevailed among them".<sup>9</sup> However, those who took the initiative to study some aspects of African culture or its philosophy of religion and cosmology, often saw merit in it.<sup>10</sup>

In 1735, George Schmidt was the first missionary to arrive in South Africa to work under the auspices of the Moravians. He concentrated his labours among the Khoi Khoi and founded a mission station at Genadendal. However, before long his efforts were disrupted and the mission forced to close down following the Afrikaner resistance, who feared "Christianity with its doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man seemed a disingenuous attempt to foment revolution".<sup>11</sup>

The pastors of the state Church of the Netherlands resident in South Africa also played an important role in frustrating Schmidt. They insisted that they alone had the legal authority to baptise within the Colony and got support from the Governor. In fact Schmidt left Cape Town to go to Amsterdam to try to obtain

permission to baptise from the authorities there but to no avail, and so he felt it pointless to go on.

In 1799, a party from the London Missionary Society arrived in the Colony to begin work there and beyond the frontier also. The LMS was a product of the new wave of enthusiasm and spiritual life that swept through Protestant circles in Europe and North America in the late eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> It was this movement that brought Christian missionary activity to southern Africa, where hitherto the church and white christians, with a very few individual exceptions, had done nothing to spread Christianity among the indigenous people.

This missionary movement, with its close relationship to the evangelically inspired anti-slavery movement in Britain, also began to raise the issue of justice and civil rights in the Colony, particularly after the coming of British rule.

John Philip<sup>13</sup> is noted among the early missionaries such as James Read and Van der Kemp also of the London Missionary Society as a civil rights campaigner for Africans. As a result of his efforts:

Accordingly, in the ensuing month of July, an ordinance in favour of the Hottentots was issued at the Cape, by the Lieutenant Governor, in pursuance of instructions from the home Government, by the provisions of which the Hottentots and other free persons of colour, within the colony, were placed, in regard to every civil and political priviledge [sic], on a footing of equality with the white colonists. And, subsequently on its being shown, by Dr. Philip, that this ordinance, though excellent on the whole, was still incomplete and, more especially deficient in security, an Order in Council was issued in January 1829, not only confirming the said ordinance, but prohibiting any governor or colonial authority whatever, without the previous sanction of the King in Council, to alter or abrogate any of the provisions of this African Bill of Rights - this real Magna Charta of the Hottentot nation.<sup>14</sup>

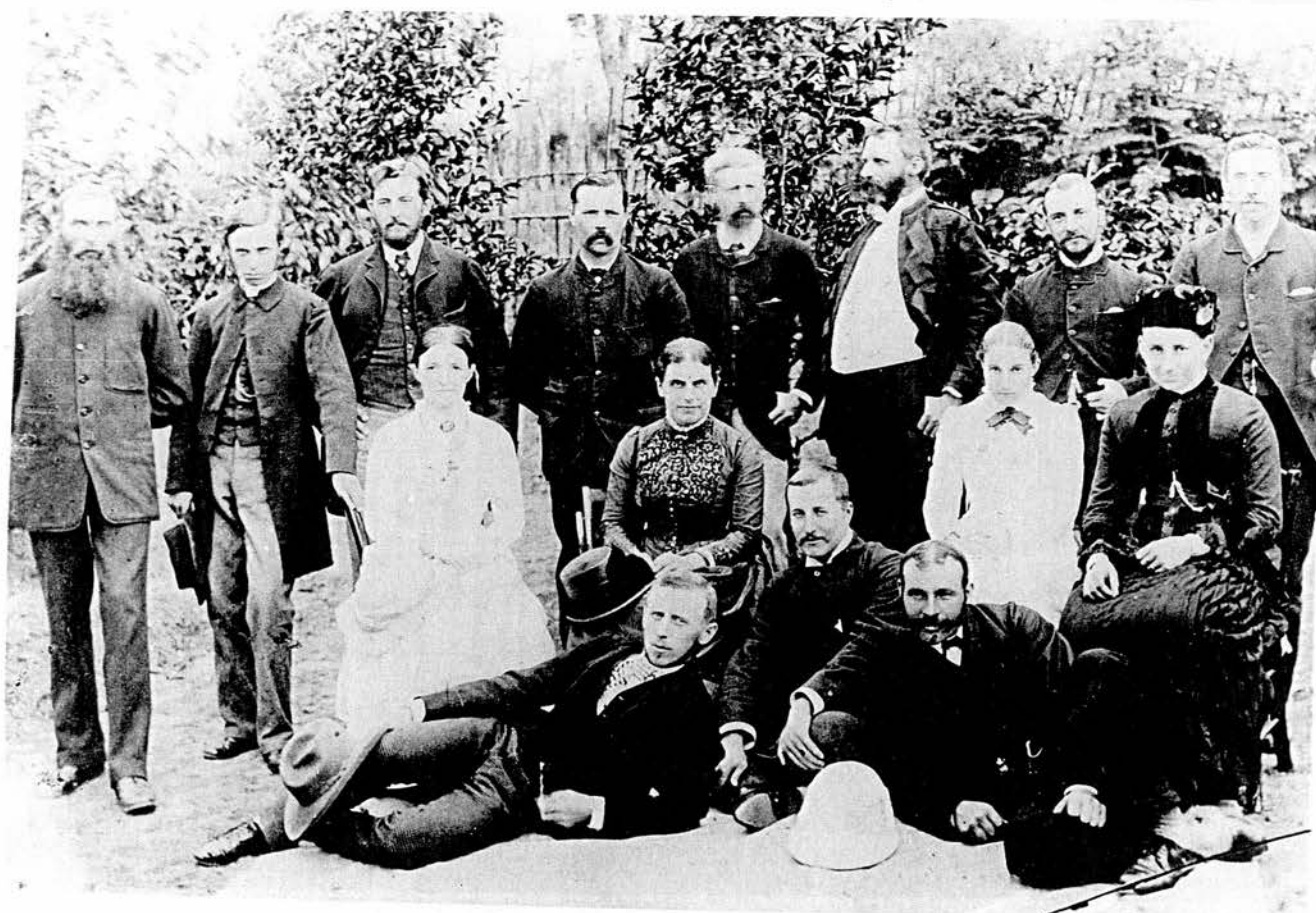
Measures such as these that began to bring relief to non-whites were met with great anger, especially from the Boers. And hence by the 1830s they began to head northwards in what is called The Great Trek. They moved for reasons scholars have considered a combination of religious, economic cultural and political factors.<sup>15</sup> However, it has also been argued that one of the main causes of the movement was the desire to establish "new states in which their strict white superiority system could be preserved".<sup>16</sup> And indeed, in both the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, the two states created by those who left on the Great Trek, "no Africans or other nonwhites could participate in politics" and "'Liberal' missionaries were not permitted to proselytize in the two republics".<sup>17</sup> The situation was made even worse when restrictive laws were enacted to keep the Africans in "closely controlled positions of subordination without any of the promises of eventual African emancipation that marked the Cape Colony".<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that as the Voortrekkers encroached into the tribal lands, Africans did not display formidable resistance against "the sustained direct thrust of organized white settlers".<sup>19</sup> This was because the various societies of the High Veld area had been badly disrupted and gravely weakened by the period of raids and wars subsequent to the creation of the Zulu empire of Tshaka - the Difaqane.

There were also conflicts between the English and the Boers as each vied for political control in the Cape Colony. For instance, "From 1803 there had been a brief restoration of Dutch power at the Cape ... the colony was handed back to the Dutch ... In 1806, however the British were suddenly back again".<sup>20</sup> De Klerk observes that "The 'English' and Afrikaners would continue to move around each

other in a variety of attitudes ... wish each other dead; but they would also desperately need each other".<sup>21</sup> In 1852, the Cape Colony received a colour blind franchise, partly as a result of the campaigns by Dr Philip and 'liberals' like Fairbain and Stockenstrom. This created a gulf between the Cape Colony and the trekker states north of the Orange. The latter point is emphasised by Cecil Rhodes<sup>22</sup> when he became Prime Minister of the Cape in 1890 "saw the Cape 'colour-blind' franchise as an insuperable obstacle to any form of Union in South Africa and felt that the Cape must come into line with the 'northern tradition'<sup>23</sup> in denying nonwhites any political franchise. This has led some scholars rightly or wrongly to conclude that "The 'liberal' policy of the British toward black Africans seem particularly designed to provoke the Afrikaners",<sup>24</sup> and Moodie further argues, "It was not so much love for the native that underlay, the apparent negrophilistic policy as hatred and contempt of the Boer".<sup>25</sup> It must be said, however, that it did not matter who the Africans sided with, because they came off worse in the end in any deal that was made between the British and the Boers. And hence some scholars observe that it is:

Against this broad backdrop, organized African political activity began to develop in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The new politics centered in the eastern Cape Colony where the well-established activities of various Christian mission churches and schools were furthering the emergence of a class of Africans who were attracted by the hope of full acceptance into a nonracial, Christian, 'civilized' society at the same time that they were intimately aware of the hardships and disabilities under which the overwhelming majority of their people lived.<sup>26</sup>

And indeed by the close of the nineteenth century one began to witness several religious and political structures "started by the natives themselves independent of any European assistance".<sup>27</sup> These were designed to achieve effective articulation and



**Plate 2.** Missionaries, African Lakes Co. staff and their wives at Her Majesty's Consulate, Nyassa, January 1886. Frederick (1852-1939) and John (1851-1940), Moir, managers of ALC standing at either end of back row; Jane Moir (Frederick's wife, seated Centre); Alexander Hetherwick (1850-1939) standing second from left.

representation of African interests. This was done by forming organizations such as Imbumba Yama Afrika, Native Education Association, Native Electoral Association and also J.T. Jabavu's Imvo Zabatsundu (Native Opinion) and the birth of various Ethiopian or Independent African Churches.

### **THE EMERGENCE OF BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA**

The creation of British Central Africa is traced back to the coming of David Livingstone about the middle of the nineteenth century. His arrival is seen as a forerunner to the introduction of commerce and Christianity. Andrew Walls states that Livingstone's missionary ventures coincided with the new missionary theories of Venn (the Secretary of the CMS) at a time when "a new consciousness of Africa was dawning in Britain, the first industrial nation, conscious as it was of a need for new raw materials and markets".<sup>28</sup> Brian Stanley on the other hand seems to question the whole ethos of the 'commerce and Christianity' attitude which he notes, "reflect a measurable relationship between the enthusiasm of the missionary movement and that phenomenon which most historians, at least, have now agreed to label 'the imperialism of free trade'".<sup>29</sup>

On 10 September 1857, David Livingstone addressed members of the Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Association, and Cotton Supply Association at the Town Hall of Manchester. Livingstone told his audience that the Zambezi River provided "a permanent path to the inland healthy region, with a view to the wide diffusion of civilization and Christianity, and endeavouring to link the interests of the African with our own".<sup>30</sup> And on 4 December 1857, in the Senate House of the University of

Cambridge delivered such a clarion call when he said, "I go back to Africa to try and make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry on the work I have begun. I leave it with you".<sup>31</sup> In response to his appeal, Anglican University students from Cambridge, Oxford, Durham and Dublin united to form a society known as Universities Mission to Central Africa [UMCA] organized according to the orders of the High Church pattern. By 1859, Livingstone was even suggesting the idea of the organization of a 'Christian Colony'

whose purpose included the bringing to an end of the Arab slave trade. He wrote:

I feel every day more and more impressed with the idea that a colony of our own hardworking Christian people is the only means that will put a stop to the slave trade entirely - and render as independent of the produce of slave labour ... in July we return to the lakes and I believe to open up the whole of Eastern Africa ... If you can do anything towards bringing the idea of a colony prominently forward, you will perform a great service - I mean a Christian Colony a bodily transplantation of all our peculiarities as a Christian people and for a specific object - rendering all our energies to the extinction of the trade in the bodies of men.<sup>32</sup>

The Universities Mission to Central Africa was the first Society to establish a station at Magomero in BCA under the leadership of Bishop Mackenzie in 1861. However, the mission survived for just two years because the Bishop and his co-founders died, and the new leader despaired of the situation and decided to move the mission to Zanzibar in 1864.<sup>33</sup> Andrew Walls notes that when Livingstone's work came to a close, "the high imperial period was already at hand, when the Western powers would divide Africa among them and establish hegemony over the rest of the world".<sup>34</sup>

After his burial at Westminster on 18 April 1874, the Free Church of Scotland General Assembly established the Livingstonia Mission as a memorial of his life and

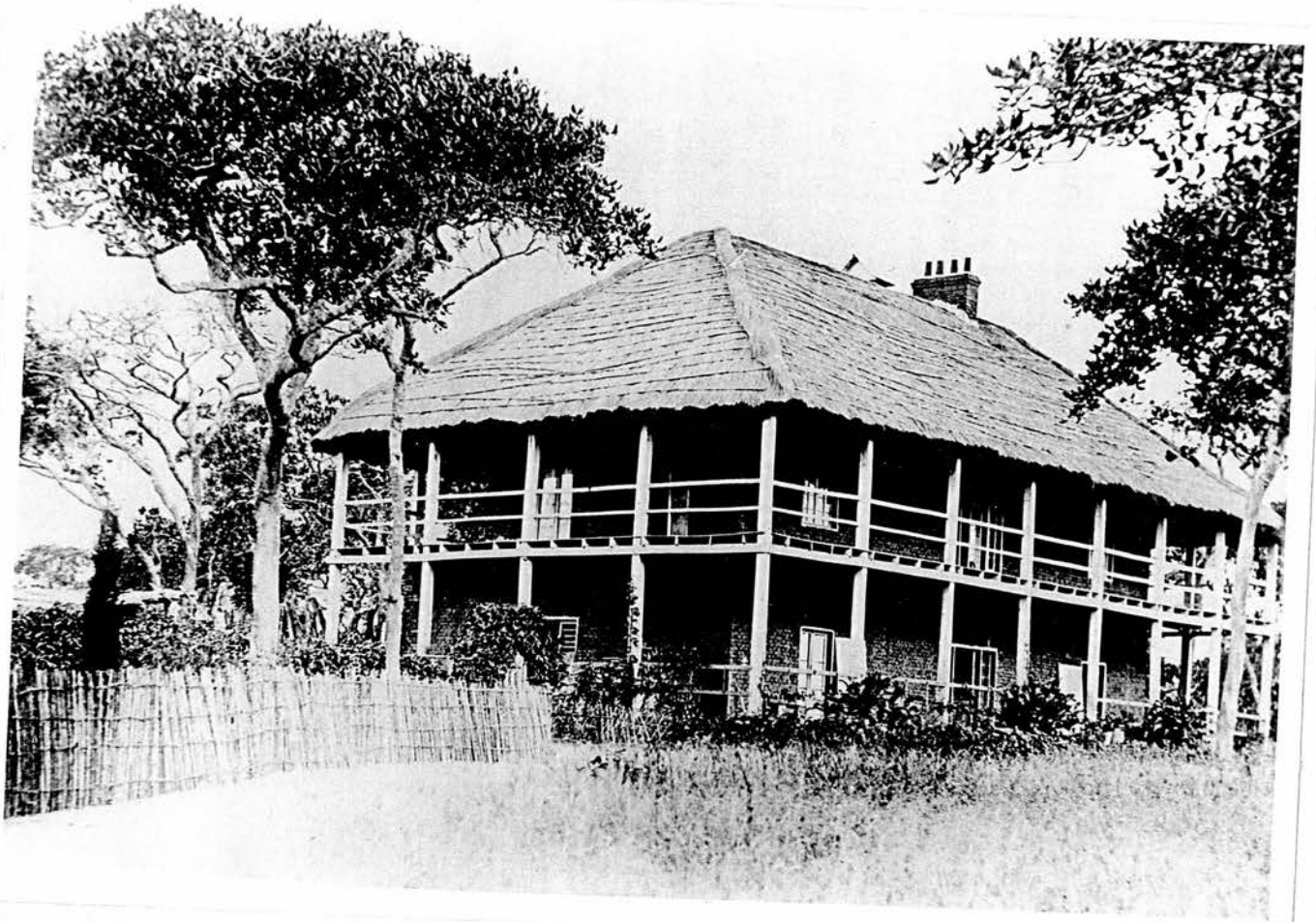


Plate 3 The Headquarters of the African Lakes Company. Manager's House, Mandala.

work. Such a move was closely followed by the established Church of Scotland who planned their Blantyre Mission.

When he arrived in British Central Africa Henry Henderson, the pioneer of the Church of Scotland expedition, appeared to have Livingstone's ideas in mind. He wrote Rev. McRae that he thought they "must be prepared to trade a little, so as to shove the Arabs out who are at present the principle traders",<sup>35</sup> and added, "These were Livingstone's views I think".<sup>36</sup> The Free Church of Scotland missionaries who concentrated largely along the lakeshore, put into operation the "other of Livingstone's basic principles of civilization - commerce".<sup>37</sup> They persuaded two devout Free Church laymen, the two brothers, John and Fred Moir from Glasgow, to form the African Lakes Company (ALC) in 1878 to cater for the commercial aspect of the missionary work. The articles of Ross and McCracken<sup>38</sup> deal adequately with the early history of the two Scottish Missions, including their role and influence in British Central Africa.

The introduction of the African Lakes Corporation with its commercial enterprise in the region must have been viewed as a threat by the Portuguese who felt outplayed by the British. And that sparked an Anglo-Portuguese conflict with both British missionaries and settlers at the centre of it. A special conference was convened on 24 April 1888 at Westminster Palace Hotel by the FMC of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the UMCA, to which some members of both Houses of Parliament came to hear a statement of Portuguese threats on missions in Nyasaland. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who presided over the meeting, reminded his audience in his opening remarks that they had "assembled not only in

the interests of missions in East Africa, but in the interest of British commerce and trade",<sup>39</sup> adding that "the trade of district, so far as it had been developed was entirely in the hands of those friendly to missions".<sup>40</sup> Dr. Archibald Scott, minister of St. George Parish of Edinburgh and also convener of the African missions subcommittee, expressed concern that:

Portugal was putting forth claims to which she had no right ever. She was claiming a right of sovereignty over entire coast from Delagoa Bay to beyond the delta of the Zambezi river. But the British missions and trading companies had in actual possession for twenty-eight of stations and land in Nyasaland ....<sup>41</sup>

Dr Scott further claimed, "There were treaties in existence which were in the Foreign Office".<sup>42</sup> The meeting followed a joint statement setting out conditions for Lord Salisbury to consider, which read as follows:

1. To secure free favourable transit for British goods in British vessels from the coast into the interior.
2. To impress on the government facts as to the increase in slave trade in connection with political changes to Zanzibar; and to take such action as may be required to check the slave trade.
3. To declare Nyasa Land, from the Ruo northwards, as sphere of British influence.<sup>43</sup>

However, Dr Hunter and Sir George Campbell objected to the last clause and pushed for an amendment which read, "To what measures seem best to them to secure the safety of British subjects and British interests in Nyasa Land".<sup>44</sup> In spite of the changes made to the statement, the third point marked an early indication of a shift from Livingstone's concept of 'Christian Colony' to that of a secular colonial state. Three significant steps leading to that end were promptly implemented:

On 19 August 1889, John Buchanan, acting British Consul, wrote to

Serpa Pinto, leader of the Portuguese expedition to Malawi, telling him that the Kololo living north of the Ruo River were placed under British protection. When the Portuguese insisted on rejecting this claim, the British took the second step when Buchanan declared a British Protectorate over a wider area which he described as, 'Makololo, Yao and Machinga Countries'. This was on 21 September 1889. The third step was taken on 14 May 1891 when the territories adjoining Lake Malawi were added to the regions adjoining the Shire River.<sup>45</sup>

Chakanza states that "a new era of peace and calm dawned with the establishment of British Protectorate in 1891, a move which forestalled both Portuguese and Swahili attempts to dominate the country".<sup>46</sup> However, Mufuka takes the view that in the wake of the Anglo-Portuguese row, Scottish Missions "served as a pressure group whose aim was to draw Malawi into the orbit of British Colonial rule".<sup>47</sup> And this was accomplished in spite of the church's policy on foreign missions, whose object was to "build up a Christian Church and not laying the foundation of a British Colony or of a small state".<sup>48</sup> It is important to note that the Scottish missionaries sought the assistance from the British Government insofar that it deterred the Portuguese in their sphere of operation.<sup>49</sup> This is clearly shown in the manner with which they reacted to Harry Johnston's appointment as the first Commissioner and Consul General of the Protectorate in July 1891. The Blantyre missionaries inundated their home constituency in Scotland, with letters critical of his conduct as "acts of oppression and cruelty towards the natives on the part of Her Majesty's Commissioner Mr Johnston".<sup>50</sup> Hetherwick denounced the Commissioner for his heavy-handedness in taking unprecedented measures ranging from the burning of houses to looting and forcing taxes on Africans without careful thought to how they could be collected. John McMurtrie, the convener of the Church of Scotland's

Foreign Mission Committee in a long letter to the Marquis of Salisbury, expressed grave concern about the current situation in British Central Africa.

Based on the information he had acquired from the Scottish missionaries, he wrote:

While we sympathise with, and are thankful for Mr Johnston's determination to put down the slave trade by force where it is necessary, the Church of Scotland missionaries represent that serious evil has resulted from violent policy pursued. From July, when the Administration commenced work, to December last, nine villages were shelled, burned, and looted viz:-

2 on Mount Mlanje  
4 on Lake Nyassa  
2 on Zomba  
1 at Ndirande

the missionaries describe what may be called a reign of terror as prevailing among the people who loyally supported the British against the Portuguese and the impression has been created that the policy of the Administration is to crush and destroy all native authority and independence ...

he has pushed on taxation of the native too rapidly. The Church of Scotland missionaries add that in the Blantyre district though it is not the most highly taxed district, the poll-tax of six shillings for every adult male is more than the people are able to pay just now. An African at Blantyre can earn only a few shillings a month.<sup>51</sup>

The Marquis of Salisbury in reply defended Her Majesty's Commissioner, arguing that "a free hand must be left to one in Mr Johnston's position".<sup>52</sup> While the rush in imposing poll-tax on the indigenous people without taking into account the ability to pay was highly suspicious, the missionaries were equally perturbed by the inconsistency of the European treaty-makers. W.A. Scott wrote:

The whole forcing of taxes is a breach of faith. Consul Buchanan got the native Chiefs to take the flag on assurance given that it did not mean taxation. Hetherwick was present when Malemya received the flag. Malemya put the question 'Does this mean tribute?' The answer was 'No, only friendship'. And yet Buchanan was not ashamed to take

the very office of tax-collector under Johnston and the next visit to Malemya was to collect gun taxes.<sup>53</sup>

The Scottish missionaries were unhappy with Johnston's close ties with Cecil Rhodes and his South African Company. The fears that the taxes being collected were channelled toward the building of Rhodes' empire were not without foundation. Hetherwick demanded answers from his allies in Scotland, "Has Johnston the power to force taxes in this way? Is he doing it as a Commissioner? Then Her Majesty's Representative is employing his authority on behalf of a commercial Company.",<sup>54</sup> and added, "a Company which has no charter is raising a revenue by taxing the natives at the rate of two month's work per year. Is this legal?"<sup>55</sup> W. A. Scott felt that in his view, "Government officials shall have no trade connections e.g. Johnston's Commissioner from Her Majesty's Government and Rhodes' paid servant at the same time".<sup>56</sup> Such concerns were reinforced by Rev Adam Currie, who complained:

We have no one here to appeal to Johnston being Rhodes' servant he calls himself the Administrator for the British South African Company, and his agent at the Ruo uses an official stamp bearing the legend 'British South African Company, Ruo' - he lets no consideration of justice or mercy stand in the way of collecting taxes that he may be able to show the revenue on the production of which depends the continuance of Rhodes' subsidy. Are we to be handed over to the South African Company? God forbid!<sup>57</sup>

Johnston, as a counter-measure, retorted the Blantyre missionaries as men who did not care "a scrap for the spread of Religion". And he argued that "The statements of Rev A. Hetherwick and Rev. Adam Currie are, in the main, a string of falsehoods, that is they speak of incidents which never occurred, and make assertions utterly devoid of truth".<sup>58</sup> He went on:

It is not true that I am a paid servant of Mr Rhodes or of the South

African Company. I have never received at any time any emolument whatever either from Mr Rhodes or from the Company, nor do I receive any allowances out of the Administration funds.<sup>59</sup>

Following the allegations made against him he threatened to sue Rev. Adam Currie and Rev A. Hetherwick "for attempting to stir up trouble between the natives and the Administration".<sup>60</sup> In contrast to the complaints made against him, he got on well with other missionary organizations which included the Free Church of Scotland.<sup>61</sup> Hence the only reason he could find for such conduct on the part of the Church of Scotland missionaries was, as he put it, was that they had:

resolved to have themselves regarded as something far superior to the ordinary men of Europeans. I found them disposed to arrogate to themselves the right of law giving between the other Europeans and the natives, and a tendency to ignore (sometimes very impertinently) the existence of any other Government but that emanating from the Mission.<sup>62</sup>

The Blantyre missionaries clearly did not overstate their claims, for there was some truth in their allegations. Johnston and Rhodes at this time shared the same ideals regarding the extension of the British Empire from Cape to Cairo, and struck a deal between them as regards to the future of BCA. Rhodes had already made significant inroads in South Africa and had his mind set on Nyasaland and even beyond. H.H. Johnston wrote to Rhodes:

You have been the direct means of saving for the British Empire all the territories stretching between the north of Transvaal between the of Transvaal and the south of TANGANYIKA and the basin of CONGO, in addition to having given a valuable impetus to the growing idea amongst the British people that we should not abandon our control over the destinies of Egypt, but that we should rather seek to open up the continuous chain of Empire from the Cape to Cairo.<sup>63</sup>

And Johnston took the occasion to remind Rhodes that the slogan 'From the Cape

to Cairo', "though often credited to you, is my invention and was one of the phrases I uttered on the earliest occasion of my meeting you in 1889 which attracted your attention".<sup>64</sup> Arthur Keppel-Jones affirms that "Johnston thought he had found a fellow spirit in Rhodes. Johnston too, was an imperial dreamer. It was he, not Rhodes, who had first conjured up the Cape-to-Cairo vision".<sup>65</sup> Johnston believed he "had but one religion, and that was the extension and development of the British Empire".<sup>67</sup> However, while the Foreign Office in London welcomed such ambitious plans to be "in the best interests of the United Kingdom, they were opposed to the expenditure of British funds".<sup>68</sup> The British Government was not prepared to use taxpayers' money for the ventures Johnston and Rhodes envisaged, let alone to entertain a scheme in British Central Africa that had increasingly come under heavy opposition from the Church of Scotland missionaries. In view of such a decision, Johnston notified Rhodes:

It is my impression that the unofficial opinion at the Foreign Office was not unfavourable to this scheme, but on the news of it reaching the African Lakes Company they incited the missionaries and others to raise a violent objection to the settled portion of Nyasaland being placed under the rule of the Company. The Government finding that this opposition was strong, and that it had this claim to consideration that it emanated from people who had been the pioneers of British enterprise in Nyasaland.<sup>69</sup>

Rhodes had already invested £10,000 in British Central Africa under the administration of Johnston. But when he realized the project was in jeopardy, he immediately decided to withdraw the extra cash of £7,500 he had promised, arguing he now intended to use it in his own territories under someone <sup>in whom</sup> he had confidence.<sup>70</sup> He accused Johnston of double-dealing, which in his view had contributed to the

failure of the scheme. Rhodes informed Johnston, "I thought, as it appears erroneously, after your visit to Cape Town, that you meant to act in the future loyally to myself",<sup>71</sup> but then added, "It is clear you must have written privately, and in a perfectly different style, to the basis arranged between us at Cape Town".<sup>72</sup> And in a defiant mood Rhodes instructed Harris (his Agent) to reduce to the old basis of supply at once, pending the transfer of expenditure to their own territories or reconsideration of the position by the Foreign Office. But to exonerate himself from this whole affair Johnston laid the blame still on Scottish missionaries of Blantyre and informed Rhodes: "They hate you because you are an Englishman because you threaten to overshadow their own petty meddling and muddling with grander schemes that will outshine mission work in popular favour".<sup>73</sup> Following this episode, Johnston's bitterness against the Scots was demonstrated when he requested the Foreign Office for a legal Vice-Consul. He outlined the following qualifications: "a barrister, a gentleman, young - not over thirty-five, of good constitution, of agreeable appearance, cheerful, and above all not Scotchman - or at any rate without a strong Scotch accent".<sup>74</sup> Davidson from the Foreign Office replied, "I will try and find a man for you who possesses at anyrate some of the qualifications you mention",<sup>75</sup> but added, "It will I fear, be by no means an easy task to discover - out of Scotland - the sort of admirable Crichton you require, but we only try our best!"<sup>76</sup> Johnston became even intolerant of other races. He wrote Sir Percy Anderson in 1894:

Personally as you know, I have a secret pity and contempt for all foreigners. I mean that it seems to me, if one has missed being an English man, it does not matter what one is, and except for our kinship with the Dutch and the Germans, which raises them a little in the scale, I think that all foreigners are just about as good one nation as

the other. If I were an Indian I would not much care whether I was governed by Portugal or France.<sup>77</sup>

The situation got to a point where Clement Scott and Alexander Hetherwick were labelled as "An Opposition Party to H.M. Administration".<sup>78</sup> However, McMurtrie, in his letter to Lord Balfour of Burleigh, stated that he believed the Blantyre missionaries to be "most loyal to Her Majesty's Government and would rejoice to see the land declared a Crown Colony".<sup>79</sup> He added that what they feared most was the handing over "the land and the people in some sense to the South Africa Company from whom £10,000 a year"<sup>80</sup> had already been negotiated. Bridglal Pachai states that in simple terms "the Blantyre missionaries were not prepared to stand aside while Rhodes, possibly assisted by Johnston, created another Rhodesia in the Protectorate".<sup>81</sup> And hence when Booth arrived in 1892 he "was one missionary who was so radical in his views and so revolutionary in his tactics that he was more than what Clement Scott and Alexander Hetherwick were accused of".<sup>82</sup>

In the future Malawi, Africans had not reached the level of education and knowledge of the wider world that the black Christian elite of the Cape Colony had at that time. They were therefore not able to develop any sophisticated form of protest against British colonial policy in the Protectorate. The Blantyre Mission, despite its important role in opposing the threat of rule by the British South Africa Company and injustices perpetrated in the first years of the Protectorate, had not yet developed an African elite similar to that created by Lovedale in the Cape. It was the arrival of Booth which began to change things because of his deliberate encouragement of African self consciousness and African criticism of colonial rule.

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## CHAPTER II

## JOSEPH BOOTH - HIS EARLY LIFE AND CAREER

Joseph Booth was born on 26 February 1851 in Derby.<sup>1</sup> He described himself as "an Englishman of the Midland Counties of humble parentage".<sup>2</sup> Booth's father was born in 1810. He worked as a silk throwster and Estate Agent and died in 1874. His mother, Phebe Spencer, born the same year as was his father, died in 1862 when Joseph was only about twelve years old. The details of his childhood years are somehow scanty; nonetheless his apologia of 1919<sup>3</sup> seems a helpful source. He recalled:

It was my Father's custom on Sunday afternoons, from the time I was 10 years of age, to recognise [sic] my 3 sisters and myself to repeat from memory the 10 Commandments: and at my Mother's request, the Catechism.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph Booth, as noted, was brought up in a strict and mixed religious home. He described his father as a "fearless" Unitarian and his mother, a devout Anglican.<sup>5</sup> However, it seems that in spite of his parents' marked religious differences, both were agreed in the manner of their children's religious instruction "to believe, as beyond doubt viz, that the 10 Commandments were the sure rule of life and God's own words".<sup>6</sup> But as Joseph Booth was made to recite by heart the "moral code" from the scriptures, the Napoleonic and Crimean war accounts narrated by his grandfather and two uncles respectively cast doubt in his mind regarding the significance of commandment-keeping. He reminisced on the way in which they were "never tired of telling how many and in what way they had killed scores and scores of French and

Russians".<sup>7</sup> And hence he came to notice inconsistencies in his parents' religious beliefs.<sup>8</sup> Booth may have viewed it as hypocrisy that a church, state and society imposed stringent moral values on people whilst it engaged in wars, a violation of the command not to kill. He pressed his father for clarification regarding the killings his grandfather and two uncles had carried out in both wars. He stated:

I asked did he [Father] fully believe the 10 laws of God. He said most certainly, every word. I asked what about the law 'Thou shalt not kill' did he believe that? Yes, he said. I then asked were grandfather and my uncle very wicked men for killing so many? And if so why did we not tell them. Father said it was quite right to kill the enemies of our king and our country.<sup>9</sup>

Booth dismissed his father's assertion that killing can only be justified if and when the national interests of the state were at stake. He eventually rejected the 10 Commandments on the premise that he saw "no proof that God spoke such words, since neither preachers nor anyone known"<sup>10</sup> to him had after all believed in them. At the age of 15, he left home and went to live in Buxton, Derbyshire, where he is known to have worked as a clerk. Shepperson and Price refer to this experience as possibly an initial step leading to several others in his career that "increased his questioning and critical turn of mind"<sup>11</sup>, bringing him into conflict particularly with the colonial administrators in Central and Southern Africa.

For years, Booth styled himself as agnostic. He went in search of "Truth" by studying and attending lectures presented by men such as:

George Jacob Holyoake, old Chartist, atheist, and author of *Sixty Years of Agitator's Life*; R. Ingersoll, the Ameri-

can propagandist for agnosticism; John Watts, the English Reformer, and Charles Bradlaugh, who refused so dramatically in the House of Commons on his appointment as Member of Parliament to take the oath on the Bible.<sup>12</sup>

These men introduced Joseph Booth to what Shepperson and Price see as "an informal university for a religious radical" and add, "For this is what Booth eventually turned out to be".<sup>13</sup> But Booth later found himself critical of his mentors for overstating their agnostic views. It is not clear from his apologia what it was in their manner which made him feel uncomfortable with their opinions.<sup>14</sup> But it may well be that instances such as were revealed by "Joseph Symes in Australia, who had seen Mr Bradlaugh 'with watch in hand at Manchester' defying God to strike him dead,"<sup>15</sup> made him feel ill at ease. Early in life, Booth had associated with both these men. He came to view Joseph Symes [an atheist, formerly a Wesleyan Minister] as "little, if any, inferior to Charles Bradlaugh of the English fame".<sup>16</sup>

When Joseph Booth eventually decided to return to Christian religion, it was through the influence of the writings of Thomas Paine "the greatest of all religious radicals whose work had stirred up the whirlpool of revolution in the two continents [America and Britain]".<sup>17</sup> Paine had formulated his own profession of faith, denounced all forms of religious institutions and claimed that his own mind was his Church.<sup>18</sup> Although his Christological view seemed to cast doubt on Jesus Christ being the Son of God, he nonetheless acknowledged His existence and ministry here on earth, a point atheists such as Bradlaugh vigorously argued against. Paine wrote:

that such a person as Jesus Christ existed and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability<sup>19</sup>

Joseph Booth certainly seems to reflect Paine's statement when he acknowledges him as the first writer:

who gave light on the matter of Christ's Life. He said it is useless and dishonest to deny that Jesus Christ lived at the time specified and that his life and death were of a remarkable character. This was my first step back to Christ.<sup>20</sup>

And what seems significant, that could well have captured Booth's interest in Paine's theology, is the revolutionary manner in which Christ is portrayed as one who "preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man".<sup>21</sup> It is important to point out that atheists such as Bradlaugh, whom Booth had first followed in the early part of his life, seem even to have rejected Christ's existence. Charles Bradlaugh wrote "Was Jesus Christ a man? If limited for our answer to the mere Gospel Jesus - surely not. His whole career is, on any literal reading, simply a series of improbabilities or contradictions."<sup>22</sup> Such a statement and indeed several others may have been the cause of Booth's shift from atheism and back to the Christian faith.

On March 29, 1868, Joseph Booth met Mary Jane Sharpe whom he later married on 15 August 1872 at Bath Buildings Baptist Chapel, in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. She is believed to have been instrumental in Booth's conversion to

Christianity. Booth embarked on a course that led him:

to a steady search of all the evidences of Christianity available, resulting after years of search, in the full belief in the super human nature of Jesus, and as a perfect example for this life and Hope in the life beyond.<sup>23</sup>

In 1880, Booth and his family emigrated to Auckland, New Zealand. He became a sheep and dairy farmer and businessman who regularly attended the Baptist Tabernacle of Thomas Spurgeon, the son of the famous Charles Spurgeon of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. On 26 February 1886, his 35th birthday, Booth experienced what he later described as a "call" to Christian commitment. We must point out that in his apologia he frequently uses the term "call", perhaps to denote a conviction that comes as a result of divine influence or guidance. John Edward, his son, presented him with a birthday card on which was a scriptural text that read "Acknowledge Him in all thy ways, and He will direct thy path".<sup>24</sup> Apparently the text inspired Booth to such an extent that he vowed to wait on God until a visible sign was given to direct him what to do.

In 1887, Booth moved again, this time to Australia where he continued his business in partnership with a Mr Darbyshire. At a local Baptist church, he was ordained as a deacon and also engaged himself in "street preaching in and around Melbourne, Australia".<sup>25</sup> This experience, he added, "seemed to act as a challenge to Freethinkers and atheists"<sup>26</sup> with whom he had frequent debates at arranged times and venues. He viewed this series of public debates in 1890 as his training

college.<sup>27</sup> Early in 1891, Booth was challenged at a public debate meeting by Joseph Symes to match his Christian belief with deeds. He told Booth to sell all he had and go to preach the Gospel.<sup>28</sup> On 1 May 1891, he sold his business and between June and September came to Britain to seek a position as a missionary, but was rejected. He recalled:

I visited various missionary societies but it was only to be repulsed ... I talked with the Baptist Missionary Society. 'Ah' the secretary said 'We are sorry for you; but you are too old. You are over forty years of age.'<sup>29</sup>

He returned to Australia disappointed but with no intention of abandoning the idea. It was later that year he drafted his missionary manifesto 'The Greatest work in the World - A Plea for Missionary Enterprise' which the editor of the Missionary Review of the World, A.T. Pierson, published in 1892. This document will be highlighted in the subsequent chapter. Before Booth's plans materialized, his wife Mary died on 9 October, 1891. And then on 19 October, he had a meeting with John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides, who endorsed his missionary manifesto. John Edward noted in his diary that his father had put before Paton "a plan for working a mission on self-supporting and self-propagating principles. When father had shown him the way he intended to try and work it, he heartily approved it and said it was an excellent plan".<sup>30</sup> On 31 October 1891, Joseph Booth finally left Australia bound for Britain together with his two children, John Edward and Emily. In England, he met Mr Ingham, a new arrival from the Congo mission field. In the course of their discussion, Booth is believed to have been advised to carry a gun if ever he con-

sidered going to Africa. He rejected the idea and eventually came to a firm conclusion regarding the truth of pacifism.<sup>31</sup> Another experience pointing to Africa was a meeting at Leeds with two African chiefs,<sup>32</sup> who extended an invitation to him to become a missionary in their country. Evidently Joseph Booth viewed such an offer as confirmation of earlier "calls" for him to go into the mission field.

### **FOUNDATION OF INDUSTRIAL MISSIONS 1892-1895**

When Joseph Booth had failed to get the backing he very much needed to enable him to go into the mission field, he decided to press ahead on his own. "No link of co-operation was formed; and heartsick of conferring with flesh and blood I quitted London in January 1892 for Africa."<sup>33</sup> He sailed on "Nubia" from Southampton on 2 January with his nine year old daughter Emily, leaving John Edward at Dr Guinness College in Bow to study medicine in preparation for missionary work. Joseph Booth arrived in Capetown, South Africa, on 7th February and toured the country for two months. He then proceeded further into the interior after which he compiled a report "bearing prospects of industrial mission in Cape Colony, Natal, Zululand, Gazaland, Zambezi Valley, Mashonaland, Manicaland and the Shire Highlands".<sup>34</sup> The following points formed part of his Industrial Mission organizational model:

- I. To find favourable conditions for putting into practice Carey's principle of planting Missions on self-supporting and self-propagating basis.

- II. To reach those at present unevangelized.
- III. To find a centre which would afford ample scope for extension from the parent station and under fairly healthy climatic conditions.
- IV. To ascertain an industry capable of yielding substantial and permanent support and self-propagating power.<sup>35</sup>

He chose Shire Highlands in which to commence his Industrial Mission scheme. Suitable conditions were located mainly in the Shire Highlands, near Blantyre; Booth selected it as the ideal place to begin the Industrial Mission scheme. When he first arrived on the 11 August 1892, he had intended to establish the first station at least fifty miles away from the other existing Missions, but the plan failed due to shortage of funds and illness. On 14 August, a Wesleyan companion, Edward Mangin from Melbourne, Australia, died of fever. Subsequently, Booth's ten year old daughter became critically ill. Johnston, a medical missionary whom Booth knew, tried to get him to abandon his scheme. He stated:

Only this morning, August 20, I have been to see a delicate little shadow of a girl, ten years of age, apparently dying of fever, in a hut near Mandala ... I have advised Booth, for the sake of his poor little motherless child, if for nothing else, to abandon his mad theory and go home; but he laughed at the bare idea, and pities my lack of faith.<sup>36</sup>

Booth also faced financial problems, partly due to the Australia bank closures. He was forced to sell possessions such as jewellery, spare clothes and even provisions, in order to secure funds for the commencement of the work. He acknowledged that the early period of his career had some bitter stages.<sup>37</sup> But he soon despatched letters to various societies with proposals of the Industrial Mission plan enclosed in order

to raise funds. On 18 November 1892, a positive response came from Robert Caldwell, a presbyterian from London who had sent Booth's report "to a few friends of Missions inviting their co-operation".<sup>38</sup> This resulted in the formation of the Zambezi Industrial Mission at Mitsidi, based on unsectarian and inter-denominational basis. Its members comprised some "belonging to the Church of England, some Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyan, Open Brethren, members of the Faith Mission, and Members of the Pentecostal League".<sup>39</sup> And further responses from Australia were received which led to the establishment of the Nyassa Industrial Mission at Likabula.<sup>40</sup> At the close of December, 1892, Joseph Booth accompanied by David Livingstone, an early ZIM adherent and interpreter named after the great explorer, visited Makololo Chiefs, Maseya and Katunga. The former was described as "a man worth knowing for he was one of several thereabouts who had crossed Africa from Quillimane to Loanda with Dr Livingstone and back to the foot of the Murchinson Falls on the River Shire where they were then, and their descendants still are located".<sup>41</sup> For three days Booth listened to a series of questions with social and political implications, raised by Maseya and his people. When the news of such a meeting taking place reached the colonial authorities, a "Zanzibari Native Soldier" was directed by Bohill, a local representative of the British Administration, to break it up, claiming "there were good and bad mission men, I [Booth] was a bad and dangerous one and must be sent away".<sup>42</sup> And apparently this was the first recorded incident where he is reported to have run into some problems with the colonial administration in BCA.

In May 1893, the ZIM party arrived, followed later by another contingent of workers, and among them was Booth's son, John Edward. By August, the ZIM staff had increased to twenty-three Europeans and fourteen overseers and evangelists. About the middle of 1893, Joseph Booth allowed George James, a Seventh-day Adventist self-supporting missionary, to stay at Mitsidi. In the course of their association, James introduced to his host the seventh-day sabbath question. George James wrote:

Although there are some things he has not yet seen in our doctrine, he is with us on the Sabbath and baptism. It was only this morning that he was giving a Bible reading on Baptism, from 'Bible Readings', to two native boys. These young men can speak English, and are engaged as often as opportunity presents itself, in teaching others ... . I have had several talks with Mr Booth on the Sabbath question, and he has decided to give Sabbath and Sunday to the Lord's work. All his men come to the house, and we have service on the Sabbath, and on Sunday the young men in the Bible class go out in companies from village to village, doing their best to tell them of the gospel ... .<sup>43</sup>

Two points are worth noting in this statement. First, the two Africans mentioned could well have been John Chilembwe and David Livingstone, who often served as interpreters for Booth on his travels in the country. Secondly, as we shall later discover, the Sabbath and Baptism doctrinal issues seem to have fuelled some controversy that later led to Booth's departure from the ZIM organization. However, "throughout 1893 Booth's movements are difficult to trace in detail. He had moved rapidly up and down the Shire: to Natal for supplies; to London on a flying visit to discuss finances with his colleagues at home; backwards and forwards ..."<sup>44</sup>

On February 22, 1894, John Edward died of Malaria, while Booth was out of the country. He was first told of his son's death in March near Chinde. In the middle of 1894, he was accompanied by John Chilembwe on a visit to the Mang'anja in the Lower Shire. It is important to point out that during this visit "Booth was allowed to give a sermon on God and Christ, the first encounter at the level of expounded theology which had taken place".<sup>45</sup> On that occasion he also reinforced his pacifist views and also claimed to have been challenged by Africans on the Sabbath doctrine. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

The work progressed steadily at ZIM and Booth, who in the early stages of his Industrial Mission paid "Calico value 2/6 (60 cents per month)"<sup>46</sup>, soon sharply raised his workers' wage rate, to the dismay and dislike of some missionaries and planters alike. The complaint was noted by the Blantyre missionaries, who reported to their home field that Booth had paid:

his men enormous wages as much as 18s a month (where the ordinary pay is 3s). He is enticing our mission boys to join his mission by the offer of this enormous increased wage. One boy who got 7s 6d at the mission, now gets 45s at Booth's.<sup>47</sup>

Booth also came under severe criticism from among his own colleagues concerning his alleged liberal policies, ranging from finances to doctrine. He noted that as "many helpers poured into the field, some thirty and more thousands of pounds were given by the public. My policy to the natives was severely challenged as too liberal by my co-workers."<sup>48</sup> At the close of 1894, he resigned from ZIM, allegedly to allow

other workers and supporters "to carry on the work on the level they approved".<sup>49</sup> But Alfred Sharpe, the High Commissioner and Governor of Nyasaland, in his despatch to the Colonial Office, stated that Booth had in fact been "dismissed by the Mission under circumstances reported to be that he had rendered himself liable to criminal prosecution in connection with his conduct of Missions financial affairs".<sup>50</sup> Booth's critics such as Boeder and others seem to have seized upon Sharpe's statement as official and final, and to have totally ignored Robert Caldwell's, the ZIM General Secretary who conducted the inquiry. In his attempt to put Sharpe's misguided report straight, he wrote to Booth:

the cause of your leaving the Zambezi Industrial Mission, we have the pleasure in stating that your severance from the Mission came as the result of doctrinal differences in relation to Baptism and to some extent a difference as to the Sabbath Day.<sup>51</sup>

The assessment of Booth by Africans such as Sazuze as early as the 1890s, in generally regarding him as a champion of their interests, is most revealing. He wrote to James Stewart that "He [Booth] I think is a one for Christ, although the Europeans here do their best to oppose him (for his ideas are the enlightenment of the natives as to the resources of their country and how to utilize them to their own benefit - is against the white man)".<sup>52</sup>

By 1895, Joseph Booth was back in Britain campaigning for his Industrial Mission scheme after he had severed his connections with both the ZIM and NIM. He eventually achieved his aim, and that led to the establishment of the Baptist

Industrial Mission of Scotland at Glasgow on 4 June.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the ZIM that operated on inter-denominational lines, the new mission was organized on a strict Baptist basis. In the Scottish Baptist Magazine of 1895, Booth was noted as having "resigned his superintendence of the Zambezi Industrial Mission because of his conviction that it is essential to teach and practice the baptism of believers and avoid a conflict of testimony among the teachers [Africans]".<sup>54</sup> But other accounts seem to suggest he left after a disagreement with a European colleague in the mission field. At the end of 1895, Booth was for three months in the United States of America. During this time he was deeply interested in Afro-Americans and their overall situation. Although his visit did not result in another Industrial Mission it nonetheless influenced him to shift from "European support to actual attempts to get Africans to set up their own self-propagating mission stations".<sup>55</sup> We shall in this chapter consider also how he endeavoured to incorporate the Afro-Americans into his scheme at different stages to develop and evangelize Africa.

#### **BOOTH: AFRO-AMERICANS AND AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN IDEOLOGY - 1896-1897**

When Joseph Booth arrived in Britain at the beginning of 1896, he married Susan Watkins on March 4th in the Victoria Baptist Chapel at Wandsworth. Thereafter he returned to Africa with a new scheme called the African Mission Transport Company. 'Life and Work in British Central Africa', a Scottish Mission paper, reported that A.M.T.C., a Commercio-Missionary enterprise registered in

London, was "to Conduct Traffic on the Shire and Zambezi Rivers", and further added, "Our old friend Mr Booth ... is at the head of it".<sup>56</sup> The steamer was designed to facilitate "the need of a separate transport agency to carry supplies, produce and Mission workers".<sup>57</sup> The profit would then be used for the development of the Industrial Missions, possibly for as long as the company was in operation. But later in 1897 he recalled that the steamer "floated and left in working order in other hands".<sup>58</sup> This is one of the several instances of Booth commencing a project and for whatever reason failing to see it established.

In September 1896, Booth left for South Africa with a Yao young man, Gordon Mataka. He took his protege to Edendale in Pietermaritzburg, the venue of a conference for Zulu ministers. Both were welcomed to attend. But as the meeting progressed Booth felt rather isolated, especially when he heard the delegates vent their anger and distrust of the white people of South Africa. To them, "Bishop Colenso 'Sobantu' was the last of the race of a true white man friends", and in the absence of Booth they hammered home the point that "no matter what the Yao [Mataka] thought, no living white man whether carrying a gun or not would in the end when war came be friends of Black men".<sup>59</sup> In his book 'Africa for the African', published in 1897, Booth wrote:

Upon the one English listener, these fell like an avalanche, for many were manifestly unanswerable charges. Their many-sided indictments summed up, amounted to this, there was no white man known to the Zulu people worthy of absolute trust, no missionary, no legislator, no civilian, NO, NOT ONE. The last honest white man was dead, and that was 'Sobantu', the man who loved the people, viz: the late Bishop Colenso.<sup>60</sup>

Although John Colenso, the Bishop of Natal, had later in life been condemned by the Archbishop Gray of Cape Town as a heretic on account of his radical and liberal views, particularly as related to the Pentateuch, most of the Africans regarded him as one who championed their rights, hence perhaps the name "Sobantu" [Father of the people].<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that exactly twenty years later [from 1896] Booth was seen as second in line after Colenso. Plaatje wrote that "Besides the Colenso family, I cannot remember any white person who has fought so doggedly in the thankless cause of an ignorant despised race, as you have consistently done".<sup>62</sup> Booth has often been dismissed as an eccentric schemer,<sup>63</sup> but it is important to note that an eminent African Nationalist, Solomon Plaatje, dubbed him as the second Bishop Colenso.<sup>64</sup>

Gordon Mataka developed a sceptical view of the white man, after the Zulu ministers had taunted him that whilst still with Booth he was not a free person but rather a slave. His instant reaction was to request permission from his mentor to return home by the first available transport, and this he did. And from that day onwards, Booth never regained Mataka's confidence.<sup>65</sup> The trip to the South whose purpose had been to dispel false allegations alleged by Arab slave traders that Europeans were cannibals, turned into a fiasco. Undaunted by the turn of events, Booth convened a special meeting in Natal which about 120 educated blacks attended, to reconsider the whole question of race relations, especially in Southern Africa. The conference extended over several days and included 26½ hours of discussion. Booth in the end urged the delegates to adopt a policy of racial co-

operation and non-violence in their struggle to regain their lost dignity from the white people.<sup>66</sup> For a while, it would seem, "he converted a number of Zulus to his point of view and they issued a manifesto in September 1896, which Jabavu's newspaper, *Imvo*, reprinted."<sup>67</sup> Booth initiated the 21 point document which formed the basis for the African Christian Union with its slogan "Africa for the African", and had as one of its aims: "To demand .. by Christian and lawful methods the equal recognition of the African and allied peoples to the rights and privileges accorded to Europeans".<sup>68</sup> This manifesto will be analyzed in detail in Chapter VI. But suffice it to state that, as Carol Page observes, "It was Booth's Natal based African Christian Union of 1896 which helped to create the social climate which generated the independence movement among Zulu churchmen".<sup>69</sup> In order to fulfil one aspect of the ACU, Booth attempted to establish an African ocean line transport system to operate between Durban and Chinde and even as far afield as England and America,<sup>70</sup> with the aim of generating wealth for and by Africans and establishing themselves into a strong skilled African trade union.<sup>71</sup> It is important to point out that Booth conceived this project on Industrial Mission lines with Africans once again at the centre of the commercial enterprise. But as will be discussed in Chapter VII, the project did not go beyond paperwork.

When eventually the ACU organization ceased to exist in South Africa, Booth described the experience as saddening and oppressive in his life but in his subsequent activities he nonetheless continued to press for radical reforms.

Joseph Booth left for Britain at the end of 1896 taking with him George Kalimbuka, a Malawian whom he met at Kimberley and the first of several Africans he took on his overseas trips. When they stopped briefly at St Helena Island, they saw a sign posted "Zulu Notice", and the words inscribed on it warned of a penalty of £20 for any visitor found speaking to the exiled Zulu prisoners without the Governor's authorization. When Booth secured permission, he discovered that the detainees were "two brothers and a son of the late famous Cetewayo, the son's name being 'Dinizulu'. There were also two sub-Chiefs or 'Indunas'".<sup>72</sup> After talking to them, he found that their feelings expressed:

the same deep seated conviction that there was no hope of generous treatment from the white race of men. 'There [their] words were sweet, but their deeds were bitter'.<sup>73</sup>

Booth described the exiled African detainees on the island with whom he had conversed as "polite, guarded, and distrustful, but in no way resentful of the intrusion".<sup>74</sup> In Britain, Booth and Kalimbuka went in "quest for 'men of peace' and equal rights for natives" in Leeds, Bradford, York, Glasgow and Edinburgh.<sup>75</sup>

At the beginning of 1897, Booth arrived back in Malawi and immediately introduced the African Christian Union scheme, with John Chilembwe as a signatory with Booth. Others who signed were Morrison Malinki, who later became the first Seventh-day Adventist ordained African minister, and Alexander Dickie, a ZIM European missionary. By April 1897, Booth and Chilembwe were together in the

United States of America in search of financial and spiritual backing from whites or blacks for their scheme. On 9 April, Booth wrote to his daughter Emily that "there are many signs that a great work will spring from this side of the ocean also. I am lecturing on 'Africa for the African'". Shepperson noted that "from the same letter, it is apparent that Chilembwe was speaking with him at meetings on this theme".<sup>76</sup> John L. Dube soon joined Chilembwe and Booth in presenting to the American public the appeal for the establishment of the African Independent Missions. Dube, later known as the founder of a militant African paper 'Ilanga Lase Natal' [The Sun of Natal] and also first president of SANNC got some support from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, whose followers caused a great stir in South Africa for promulgating Ethiopianism. Meanwhile in Richmond, Virginia, Booth and Chilembwe's association was strained by the experience of racial antagonism. "White youths hurled stones and abuse at them for walking together with an air of equality; also for sitting on the same public seats in the park."<sup>77</sup> In September 1897, at a large conference of black ministers in the city of Philadelphia, Chilembwe reluctantly parted from his mentor. "Mr Booth," he stated:

We must now part. God has brought me to good friends. I am now a man and can walk alone. For 10 years you have been kind to me and carried me like a baby, for which I shall be thankful to you till I die.<sup>78</sup>

But perhaps Booth's greatest achievement on this trip to America, and the most revealing was the publication of his book Africa for the African at Morgan College in Baltimore. This edition was an extended version of his 1896 ACU document.

Joseph Booth then approached on his own the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in New York. On 27 September 1897 he introduced to their committee his Industrial and Christian development scheme for Africa. But his proposals were later rejected on the grounds that the society had independently formed its own programme called "The American Baptist Industrial Missionary Society".<sup>79</sup> The ABFMS was instrumental in introducing him to the Seventh-day Baptists. They sent Booth to meet its leaders in the city of Plainfield, New Jersey.<sup>80</sup> It is also believed that between 1897 and 1898 he was involved with the African Baptist Industrial Mission and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In July, Mary Winifred, his daughter, was born. We shall consider Booth's involvement with the Seventh-day Sabbatarian Churches.

#### **BOOTH AND THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH CHURCHES 1898-1905**

Joseph Booth first made contact with the Seventh-day Baptists in 1898 when he claimed to have been directed to go to Dr Main's church at Plainfield. On 9 July he occupied their pulpit and addressed its congregation regarding the work among the Africans. Booth's previous encounters with the Seventh-day Adventists and questions from Africans on the Sabbath now led him to a full and free discussion on the subject with Dr A.H. Lewis and Dr A.E. Main, the two SDB leaders. In the end he saw the Seventh-day Sabbath "in the true light and accepted it"<sup>81</sup> and together with his wife presented himself for full membership. On 24 September 1898, the Booths were united with the Plainfield Seventh-day Baptist Church. Then at

Piscataway, near Plainfield, on 29 September he wrote an apology on "Why I abandoned Sunday-keeping", a document which reflected yet another radical departure from his former belief, and which will be carefully assessed in Chapter IV.

The enthusiastic response to Booth's Missions appeal led the SDBs to duly form the "Sabbath Evangelizing and Industrial Association" on January 30, 1899. The organization was established as a business enterprise in order to take advantage of the laws of the State of New Jersey which favoured voluntary charitable corporations<sup>82</sup> and yet still retain SDB principles. "The Association was incorporated with a capital stock of \$20,000, divided into four annual series of 5,000 shares, value \$1.00 each. After about 3,000 annual shares had been sold, it was thought best to start the work."<sup>83</sup> On 17 April 1899, an agreement was signed between the SEIA officials and the Booths.<sup>84</sup> They then left New York with their little daughter on 19 April, and travelled through London to arrange for some supplies. They arrived in BCA on 16 July 1899. But Booth had barely begun to settle when a band of Africans previously known to him queried "whether there were commandments for whites and different commandments for the blackmen".<sup>85</sup> Booth, who himself had long felt perturbed by the inconsistencies of the colonial system in the manner in which it affected Africans, decided in August 1899 to publish a petition in the local newspaper and also have it circulated in the country to obtain signatures. The petition immediately led to a warrant for his arrest by the Colonial authorities "on a charge that he had occasioned grave dangers to public order by certain acts and publications in August, 1899, in the Protectorate".<sup>86</sup> Plans were also under consideration to have

him deported to Natal, but he evaded it by escaping into Mozambique. The SEIA officials responded swiftly by disassociating themselves from the petition. In a lengthy statement they informed the Foreign Office in London:

"We desire most emphatically and unqualifiedly to disclaim any participation in or favour with such petition, and as soon as it was brought to our attention we immediately placed ourselves in communication with the nearest representative of Her Majesty, the British Council General at New York City, to whom we made a statement identical with the above, and upon his advice, desire to hereby place ourselves on record before your honourable office as disavowing his act, and have sent a similar communication to H.M. Commissioner and Consul General at Blantyre ...

"We deeply regret that he should have taken any such steps which should bring him or us under the displeasure of the British Government.

"We have expressed our displeasure to our missionary and have in unmistakable terms demanded that he shall not mix up in political affairs".<sup>87</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is not to delve into the intricate details of this whole affair, but suffice it to say that in January 1900, Booth gave an undertaking to abstain directly or indirectly from taking part in political matters and to withdraw the petition forthwith. The warrant for his arrest was then rescinded and permission granted to return to the country, together with his family. We should point out that when Booth first arrived in the country from the USA, he resided temporarily at NIM but when the officials in the London office found out, they

"resolved to inform Mr Deeth [missionary] that the council had heard with regret of the presence of Mr Joseph Booth at Likabula and request Mr Deeth to bring his stay there to a conclusion as speedily as possible".<sup>88</sup>

But Deeth told the Council that it was better to let the Colonial administration evict

him. He stated that "it appeared from other sources that his action in raising an agitation among the natives might induce the government to request him to leave the country".<sup>89</sup> But as we noted, Booth was not deported. John Gordon, his infant son, believed to have been born on 27th February, died on March 29, 1900.

On June 8, 1900, Booth, assisted by Miller, a ZIM missionary, purchased a 2001 acre plantation from a Mr Werth at a cost of about \$9,761.70. The Booths decided to name it "Plainfield" Mission "to commemorate the fact that it was in Plainfield that God made known to them his will regarding the Sabbath-day".<sup>90</sup> From its inception, Booth seems to have attracted a large work force of about 478 Africans, for whom he provided daily worship services and a special English class. A congregation of about three to four hundred gathered every Saturday for Sabbath services each week. He is also believed to have established a Native [African] Co-operative Society. But in spite of the progress, the Mission faced problems through the failure of coffee plants, Booth's liberal employment policies, and these, coupled by his illness, caused him to decide to leave on 17 July 1900. Bakker, his replacement, arrived on 31 May. On 26 October 1901, Booth arrived at Plainfield in the USA to hold discussions with SEIA officials regarding the future of the Mission station. And when they could not manage to meet the financial budget Booth had proposed for the Industrial work, the contract between them was terminated on 3 December 1901.

After his departure from the Seventh-day Baptist Church, Booth established

the African Repatriation Society. The main aim of the organization was to interest Americans, especially the black community, in the need to form Christian settlements in Africa on a self-supporting basis.<sup>91</sup> Booth spent much of November and December on a campaign trail to solicit support in centres in the East with large black populations. The SEIA officials offered him and his society the opportunity to purchase the Plainfield Mission for \$12,500.3, but nothing seems to have materialized in securing the station.

On 19 January 1902, Booth contacted Booker T. Washington, the founder of the Tuskegee Industrial Institute, for backing. The moderate American black leader seemed sceptical of Booth's preference for the exclusion of white people from black settlements. Washington strongly "advocated black and white co-operation, with the black man first learning to acquire skills that were necessary for the economic progress, before clamouring for equality with the white man".<sup>92</sup> Dissatisfied with Washington's philosophy, he then turned to W.E.B. du Bois, the black radical who believed in immediate political and social advance for black people. However, even Du Bois seems not to have endorsed Booth's schemes, including the African Development Company proposal he had put forward.

Joseph Booth decided to turn to the Seventh-day Adventists. His first contacts in New York were Mr and Mrs Haskell, a couple he had previously met whilst in South Africa. He later attended part of the SDA Lake Union Conference, where he delivered a speech relating his African experiences. Then, at the request of the

Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Committee, he went to Battle Creek where he addressed a group of medical students and staff members at their Sanitarium. On 26 April, at midday Sabbath Service, he occupied the pulpit of the Tabernacle and spoke to a captivated audience. His presentation seemed to have been well received for W.A. Spicer, the Mission Board Secretary, commented that "the sweet Spirit of the Lord seemed to rest upon the congregation, and to witness to the testimony born concerning the manifest working of the Lord in behalf of the peoples still in darkness".<sup>93</sup> Later in the afternoon, by a unanimous vote, the Battle Creek Church endorsed Booth's appeal to "enter upon mission work in Nyasaland and pledged themselves to support Brother Booth in the field for one year".<sup>94</sup> The local Church Board voted \$600 from its missionary funds for his expenses when returning to the B.C.A. Other funds were raised through pledges and donations as follows: "Minnesota, \$,1000; Iowa, \$500; Kansas, \$500; Southwestern Union, \$500; Central Union, \$500; Colorado, \$250; Missouri, \$1,000".<sup>95</sup> The Missionary Society of the Battle Creek Church added a further \$500 in addition to what they had already donated; and through Booth's initiative, the Seventh-day Adventists purchased the Plainfield Mission Station from the Seventh-day Baptists for \$4,000. Joseph Booth and his family were assigned to take charge of the first SDA work in Nyasaland alongside Thomas Branch, a black man and his family. The appointment of Thomas Branch seems to have been influenced by Booth, as Spicer commented:

The situation in Central Africa is such that colored workers may render special service, where the white face could not get access. The natives of the interior have besought Brother Booth, if he loved them, to bring out to Africa one of their brethren of whom they have vaguely heard.





Plate 4. Joseph Booth and his wife Annie Susan and daughter Emily 'Dot' together with Thomas Branch, his wife Henrietta, daughter Mabel (Centre) and two sons

It was then decided that we might appropriately send out one of our colored brethren as our first contribution to Brother's party.<sup>96</sup>

On 7 May, Booth, his wife Annie Susan and their five year old daughter, Mary Winifred, left first for London to attend the European General Conference which convened from May 15-20. During the session, Booth delivered two speeches, the first on "The Power of Truth" and the other on "Living Water from the heart of God".<sup>97</sup> Booth's talks were similar in content to what he had already presented at Battle Creek on 26 April and whose abstract was published in the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald to be used for the "Third Sabbath Reading" throughout the denomination.<sup>98</sup> The article mainly dealt with his call into the mission field, his African experiences and his conversion to the Seventh-day Sabbath. When the conference had ended, at the request of Conradi, the European leader of the SDA Organization, Booth toured Germany and several surrounding countries, spreading his evangelical missionary message, and his short visit led to the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist German East Africa Mission. When he returned to Britain, he joined his colleague, Thomas Branch, in London to make final preparations for Nyasaland. But before they departed, Booth, accompanied by Branch and his wife, approached the NIM Council officials with whom he had previously associated, to discuss a deed of 1896 whose signing had still not yet been completed in 1896. The NIM minutes were recorded as follows:

Mr Booth informed the Council that the Deed transferring 50 acres of land at Kilabula reserved to him, to himself and certain native helpers, as trustees had never been completed and he was desirous of substituting other names (including Mr and Mrs Branch) for the natives mentioned

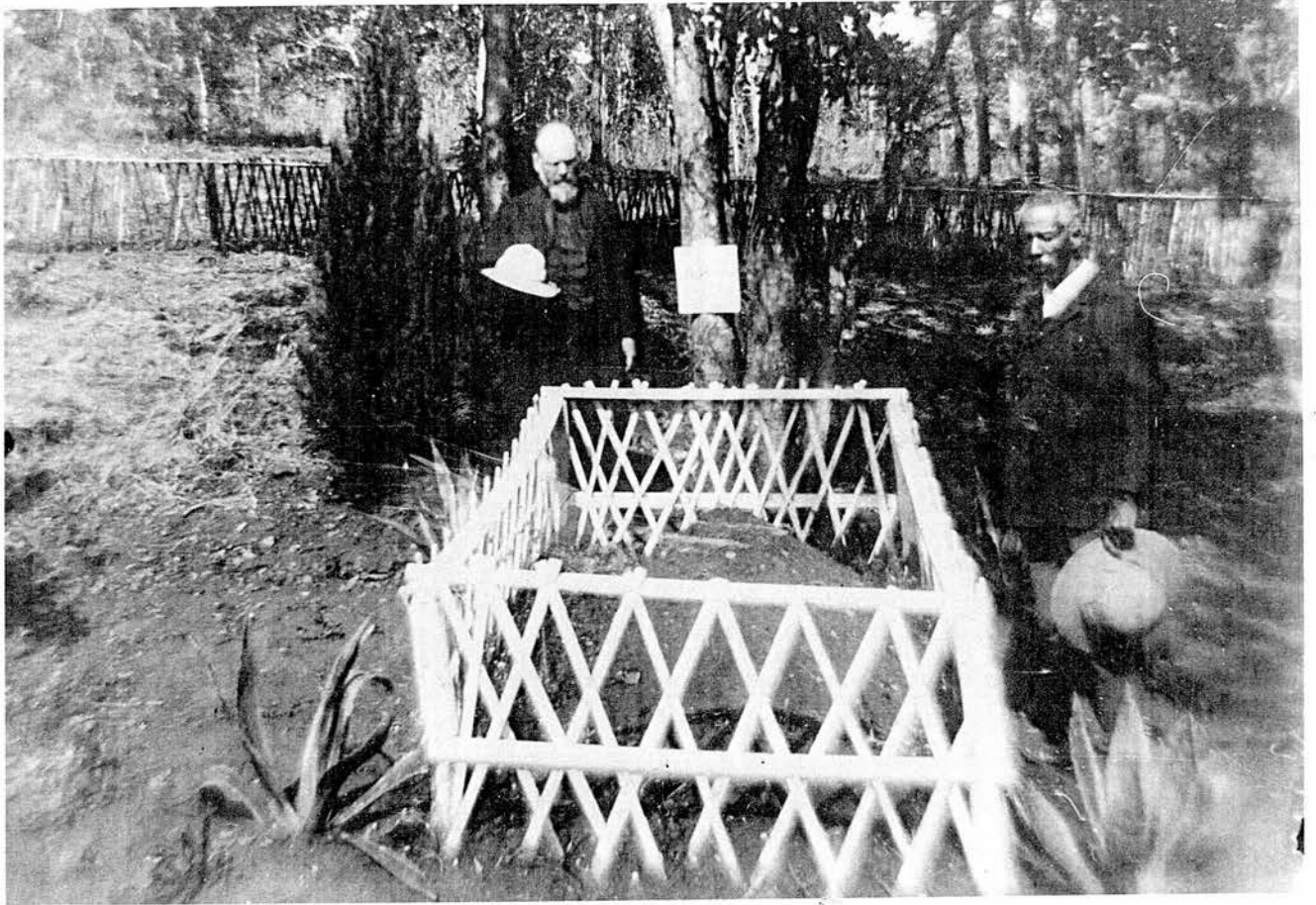


Plate 5 W.S. Hyatt and Thomas Branch pay tribute to Joseph Watson (originally from Ireland) who had arrived from Battle Creek (USA) to replace Booth in 1904 but died shortly after arrival.

in the original draft. The council while willing to agree to this cause informed Mr Booth of the inconvenience and even scandal which had arisen through the Sunday labour practised by some of his friends in Africa, holding what were known as 'Seventh Day' principles ... They expressed hope that if Mr Booth found it necessary to occupy the land in question, he would undertake that no Sunday labour should be permitted in such close proximity to our own station.<sup>99</sup>

Booth made the amendments on the Deed but without giving the requested undertaking regarding the Sabbath question, and therefore the NIM Council did not complete the Deed. It was later learned that Booth and his working party had already left for Africa.

Joseph Booth worked with the Branch family for six months and then left for South Africa, taking Peter Nyambo with him and possibly Elliot Kamwana as well. Contrary to Langworthy's criticism of Thomas Branch as "uninspired, unimaginative, cautious and in some ways, not very competent",<sup>100</sup> he has been regarded by Adventists as the missionary who laid the foundation of the Church for the five years he was at Plainfield SDA Church Mission. W.S. Hyatt, the leader of the Southern African Union Conference of the SDA Church, in whose constituency Nyasaland was, commented after touring Plainfield Mission and other stations for three weeks, "I can say that the Lord is truly blessing the labour of this family."<sup>101</sup> However, <sup>in spite</sup> ~~in~~ spite of Langworthy's judgement, it is important to note that although Branch was conservative in his approach to mission work, he nonetheless was well regarded by most Africans and did lay the foundation of the future Malamulo Mission.



Plate 6. Rev N. Cheek (standing right) from Chilembwe's PIM with the Branch family at Malamulo House, probably taken in 1905. These were the first African-Americans in BCA.

In August 1903 Booth contacted the Seventh-day Adventists with a new scheme to open a new field in East Africa. The request was not only turned down, but the Colonial officials in the country also refused to grant him any land for any project. In December he compiled a detailed "List of Britain's Native African Tribes".<sup>102</sup> Booth returned to Britain in 1904 and was re-employed by the Adventists as a colporteur, but later showed no keen interest in such a job. He insisted on wanting to return to Africa as a missionary. After several talks with the Committee, Booth's contract with the SDAs was terminated. W.I. Bartlett, the Chairman of the Committee that looked into his case, issued the following statement:

That Brother Booth has been dealt with in liberal and indulgent manner, that the S.D. Adventist General Conference has done more than it was really justified in doing in contracting with him on the last occasion since leaving Africa, that Brother Booth's connection with the SDA cause does not appear to have been profitable thereto: and that any new agreement would not be likely to result more favourably. The Brethren sincerely wish Brother Booth success in any work to which God has called him<sup>103</sup>

During 1905 and 1906, Joseph Booth was connected with Naoroji Dadabhai, an Indian political activist in Britain. Booth became his agent in the distribution of literature in Manchester and Glasgow areas. Dadabhai wrote to Booth outlining his philosophy, which included that "the duty of the more civilized is not to subject and plunder the less civilized, but to guide, help and uplift them without depriving them of their independence".<sup>104</sup> The government's prohibition of Dadabhai's so-called propaganda may have been the reason Booth severed his links with him. In 1906, Booth managed to interest Hollis of the Church of Christ to go to Nyasaland and

open a station. Later Hollis was deported by the British administration because of his supposed association with John Chilembwe.<sup>105</sup>

### **BOOTH: THE WATCHTOWER MOVEMENT, SEVENTH-DAY BAPTISTS AND CHURCH INDEPENDENCY 1906-1912**

Toward the end of 1906, Booth was in touch with the adherents of the Watchtower Movement in Scotland. They placed in his hands the "Millennial Dawn", which seems to have generated his interest in working with them. He then travelled to the USA to meet its leader, Charles Russell, regarding the possibility of opening up work in Africa. When the permission was granted, Booth quickly made his way to South Africa in 1907. During the same year he made an attempt to enter Nyasaland, but the colonial authorities stopped him. His alternative plan was "to train evangelists to return to their home areas to establish Churches on their own."<sup>106</sup> Booth's prominent Watchtower protégé was Elliot Kamwana, whom he tutored and later sent to Nyasaland, where he subsequently aroused a new self consciousness among Africans. Booth's new strategy was curtailed, especially when F.Z.S. Peregrino, a so-called "pan-Africanist"<sup>107</sup> turned against him and became an informer for the South African government. Peregrino was born in the Gold Coast, West Africa. In 1866 he had moved to Britain, where he lived for 23 years. He married a Welsh woman and fathered several children. He worked as a warehouse clerk and iron worker', then later went to the United States of America, where he began to publish a paper, the Buffalo Spectator.<sup>108</sup> After the Pan African Conference of 1900, he moved to South Africa. In the early years of his career he had

associated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, but then severed his links with it and became a spy, while carrying on his business in South Africa. He wrote to Windham, the Secretary for Native Affairs, "Booth has left Cape Town and is travelling to Pretoria. He is extremely dangerous as he is protected by his white colour. He gathers crowds of Africans around him and preaches openly: Africa for the Africans. He was very successful in persuading many Africans to join his organization that is based in Allegheny, Cely, Pa, USA."<sup>109</sup>

Peregrino then requested Windham to check Booth's movements, especially in the Transvaal area. Further reports to the South African government resulted in an African detective, known only as 'Philip', being deployed to shadow Booth's activities.<sup>110</sup> More details regarding Booth and the Watchtower Society during this period will be discussed in Chapter V. However, early in 1910 Joseph Booth broke away from the movement after he had clashed with Charles Russell, its leader, primarily over the Sabbath question.

In June 1910 Booth turned again to the Seventh-day Baptist Missionary Society and the American Sabbath Tract Society for aid in fostering Seventh day interests in Nyasaland.

As a result of Mr Booth's plea the Tract and Missionary Boards united in an appropriation to native pastors and evangelists to be expended at Mr Booth's discretion, and an appropriation was also made to Mr Booth personally as a supervisor of the native work. Subsequently these appropriations were increased and a further amount was granted for printing.<sup>111</sup>

When Booth had been denied entry into Nyasaland, he adopted a method whereby he trained his proteges and sent them to their home country, and thereafter corresponded with them through letters. He argued that such a plan was good

because it encouraged the African pastors to be more independent and self-reliant, and "to stand alone without white supervision or assistance"<sup>112</sup>. But from early 1911, Booth faced some problems with the S.D.B. Missionary Board in America and the pastors in Nyasaland.

The Missionary Board's appropriation (which Mr Booth had elected to use in Nyasaland) failed to arrive for several months. Mr Booth thus found himself unable for some time to fulfil his promises of monthly remittances to the native pastors, with the result that they complained of his neglect.<sup>113</sup>

The situation was made worse when Booth's pastors were threatened with expulsion by their congregations, largely due to Elliot Kamwana's campaign and call to opt out from the S.D.B.s and turn to the Watchtower Movement. However, the setback was temporary because most of the Tonga pastors moved Westwards and established themselves in Mzimba area, setting up a network of churches among the Ngoni people. It was then that several pastors demanded a resident European missionary, but the idea was severely criticized by Joseph Booth and Charles Domingo, who seem to have insisted on African churches remaining independent of foreign direct control. In 1912, N.O. Moore and Wayland D. Wilcox were duly appointed by a joint committee of the Seventh-day Baptist Missionary Society and the American Sabbath Tract Society to go to South and Central Africa to inspect and assess the situation of the Sabbath-keeping interests they sponsored. The publication of their 735 page report to the joint committee, which had both positive and negative elements in it regarding Booth, subsequently led to the termination of financial support for Booth and his Nyasaland Sabbath Churches in July, 1912. Booth's association with the congregations also ceased due to limited funds and the problem of distance.

### **BOOTH: RELIGION, POLITICS AND 'EQUAL RIGHTS', 1912-1919**

By early 1912, even before his association with the Seventh-day Baptists had finally been brought to an end, Booth had already started developing a new scheme called the British Christian Union.



Plate 7. Rev. N. Cheek baptizes by immersion at Chilembwe's Providence Industrial Mission. John Chilembwe (Booth's protégé) (standing background) is wearing a straw hat and bow-tie.

Moore and Wayland confirmed in their report that the function of the B.C.U. was to "promote and foster a policy of peace between all British subjects of whatever race or color".<sup>114</sup> Booth claimed to have had the support of Dr Lyman Abbot, Dr W.E.B. Du Bois, Bishop Turner, Rev. Isaiah Pinkham, Rev. J.L. Dube and Solomon T. Plaatje among others. In May 1913, he published another leaflet with updated political information which covered mainly the events that had occurred in Central and Southern Africa. He cited the following significant developments:

1. That the Native African Congress [ANC] had made its reasonable declaration.
2. The continued independence of the Basuto people's need to be regarded as assured for an indefinite period.
3. The ownership of 100 millions of unalienated land in the Matebele and Mashona country known as South Rhodesia had been made available for settlements.
4. That the need for an African University on British soil and the provision of adequate education for Natives in Africa had been publicly acknowledged by the highest British African Authorities.<sup>115</sup>

The leaflet extensively quoted speeches made by Saul Msane and Solomon T. Plaatje, at their African National Congress meeting. He also quoted Peter Nyambo's article that F.Z.S. Peregrino had published in his paper called *The South African Spectator*. Booth viewed their statements as a justification of the British Christian Union warning and programme submitted in February 1913. On 12 May 1913, aboard a steamer "SS Ballarat" from Melbourne en route to London through Capetown, about twenty-five passengers responded to Booth's B.C.U. by endorsing its appeal. They wrote:

We the undersigned ministers and passengers have heard delivered and discussed, with much satisfaction and interest, before a considerable audience of South African white residents, a lecture by Pastor Joseph Booth, General Secretary of the British Christian Union, entitled 'Britain's African Problem' and after hearing the questions, criticisms

and answers spiritedly given and responded to, we have no hesitation in commending to the serious attention of all Loyal Members of British Empire, the lecture referred to, also the exposition and printed appeals of the British Christian Union for the months of February and May respectively.<sup>116</sup>

Booth was on his way to Britain "to oppose the current Native policy in the South African Union and in the sections called South Rhodesia and North-East and North-West Rhodesia".<sup>117</sup> In November, he approached Washington again to try and persuade Andrew Carnegie to promote racial peace in South Africa by providing \$100,000 a year toward the Afro-American settlement. But Park, the Chief Adviser of Booker T. Washington on African affairs, dismissed Booth as a "little dinky missionary" whose financial peace plan would be to fight the English government in South Africa, to whose policy Booth was opposed and whom the colonial authorities regarded as an enemy to public peace.<sup>118</sup> Washington's reply, although drafted by Park, concluded that "the introduction of another alien element into South Africa would only increase the present irritation and make conditions worse".<sup>119</sup>

In January 1914, Annie Susan, his wife, had a breast cancer operation, and therefore both could not afford to maintain their boarding property, the 'Albany House' in Capetown. They eventually abandoned it in March. In May 1914, Joseph Booth and Peter Nyambo drafted the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Native Appeal to King George the Fifth, which the latter took to England.

Contrary to what most writers have been willing to admit, I believe that Joseph Booth was heavily involved and connected, not only with "Rhodesia-Nyasaland" political affairs, but more particularly with the SANNC. My assertion, that Booth served as a broker between Central and South African Nationalist politicians and groups for the sole purpose of encouraging them to work together towards liberation, will be argued in Chapter VI.

In October 1914, Booth gained the support of the International Correspond-

ence Schools, based in London but with a branch in Capetown. The ICS management agreed to send him to Basutoland as its agent to interview Chiefs in order to ascertain the feasibility of such a school being opened in their areas. In a rather patronising manner, Bysse, the Branch Manager, applied for permission from Sloley, the Resident Commissioner in Basutoland. He wrote:

We do not teach natives within the Union, and we have no desire to do anything which will cause unfair competition with the white artisans, but I see a great opportunity of supplementing the very excellent work done by the trade schools in native territories in such subjects as Blacksmithing, woodworking, wagonbuilding and building.<sup>120</sup>

From the very beginning Booth was at variance with his new employers. He defied the organization's partisan spirit and on his own initiative produced a prospectus that offered blacks the same courses reserved for white students. While Bysse may have selected a few low grade courses as suitable only to Africans, Booth's brochure included practically all the courses ICS offered such as Architecture, Civil Engineering and Commerce, and on it added "For terms apply to Mr J. Booth ICS Agent, P.O. Maseru, Basutoland".<sup>121</sup> The Basutoland authorities, who responded swiftly to Booth's employer, did not see the necessity for any further extension of schools in the territory. The Bassutoland official further stated:

Mr Booth should be informed that in view of existing educational system in Basutoland the Establishment of such a school as he describes appears to be quite unnecessary and the AC cannot give recognition in support of any such scheme.<sup>122</sup>

Joseph Booth claimed that he had interviewed Chiefs and received remarkable responses indicating their willingness to provide "a small place or school, where their sons and others desiring servicable or mature English or any of the ICS courses may come as students".<sup>123</sup> And for beginners Booth intended to offer first shorthand, typewriting and good English classes. Booth contended that other than dismiss the whole scheme as unnecessary, he wanted to know where there was any legal objection. On 11 January 1915, he signed a formal agreement with Chief Mpaki

Molapo, using Dishobana and Tsiame Molapo, the Chief's children as witnesses. But when he took the document to the government authorities for endorsement at Maseru, they "declined to stamp or permit the agreement to be entered upon legally".<sup>124</sup>

While Booth was still in the course of getting the ICS programme started, the Nyasaland colonial authorities charged him with having been the prime mover of the liberation struggle led by his former protege, Rev. John Chilembwe, on 23 January 1915.<sup>125</sup> The Secretary of State for Colonies in London and the High Commissioner in South Africa were immediately alerted and told to watch closely Booth's movements. Their despatches read as follows:

**TELEGRAM MESSAGE TO LONDON:**

Can you ascertain whether JOSEPH BOOTH is still in England and if so have his movements watched. Correspondence seized indicates implication on his part in recent rising.<sup>126</sup>

**TELEGRAM MESSAGE TO SOUTH AFRICA:**

Can you ascertain whether Joseph Booth last address, in July, 1914 Beaumont Villa, Arthurs Road, Cape Town, is still in South Africa and if so have his movements watched. Correspondence seized indicates implication on his part in recent rising.<sup>127</sup>

Joseph Booth was in Basutoland unaware of what was happening in Nyasaland. Although the South African government kept him under close observation, their counterparts in Nyasaland had admitted that there was not enough evidence to apply for his extradition to BCA to face prosecution. On 30 April, Booth wrote a long letter addressed to the President of the African Chiefs and members of the Basutoland. In it he uncompromisingly raised political and social issues that affected their country. In a letter to Viscount Buxton, the Resident Commissioner in Maseru again accused Booth of interference in matters with which he had no concern and also for the fact that he had "publicly advocated the placing of the native on an equality with the European in all matters pertaining to the administration of the state".<sup>128</sup> On

4 July 1915, Booth formulated the British African Congress appeal in which, among other points, he reiterated his deep concern at the rejection of the previous African petitions and appeals.

It must be pointed out that even before Booth published his BAC document, an order had been issued by the High Commissioner for Booth and his wife to leave Basutoland. The full text reads as follows:

Under instructions received from his Excellency the High Commissioner issued under the provisions of Proclamation No. 46 of 1907, I, Herbert Cecil Stoley, Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, do hereby in terms of section 1 of the said Proclamation order Joseph Booth and Annie Booth to leave Basutoland within a period of fourteen days after the service of this order, and further warn the said Joseph Booth and Annie Booth that the neglect to obey this order will render them liable to the pain and penalties provided in the said Proclamation No. 46 of 1907.<sup>129</sup>

At first, Booth protested vigorously and immediately demanded a public trial in the presence of his accusers. He challenged Herbert C. Stoley, the Resident Commissioner, that the charges that he [Booth] and his wife constituted "a danger to the peace, order and good government"<sup>130</sup> of Basutoland, as mentioned in the section quoted, could not be proved. But afterwards he conceded, stating, "seeing I am in my 65 years and my wife is delicate by reason of a recent surgical operation, I am willing, after near 25 years missionary effort to secure for British African Natives 'Equal Rights' (see circular enclosed) to return".<sup>131</sup> Perhaps somehow feeling rather upset by the action taken by the British Government, Booth requested to return to New Zealand and not Britain. The deportation order was held for a while after a horse had injured him. And meanwhile, the intervention of the ICS management for him to be allowed to stay proved unsuccessful. Booth and his wife Annie Susan were put aboard "S.S. Norman" from Capetown to London, but the deportation did not silence his political activities.

Joseph Booth sent to Charles Domingo a copy of the BAC document. When Domingo replied in support of the appeal, the Nyasaland authorities intercepted the

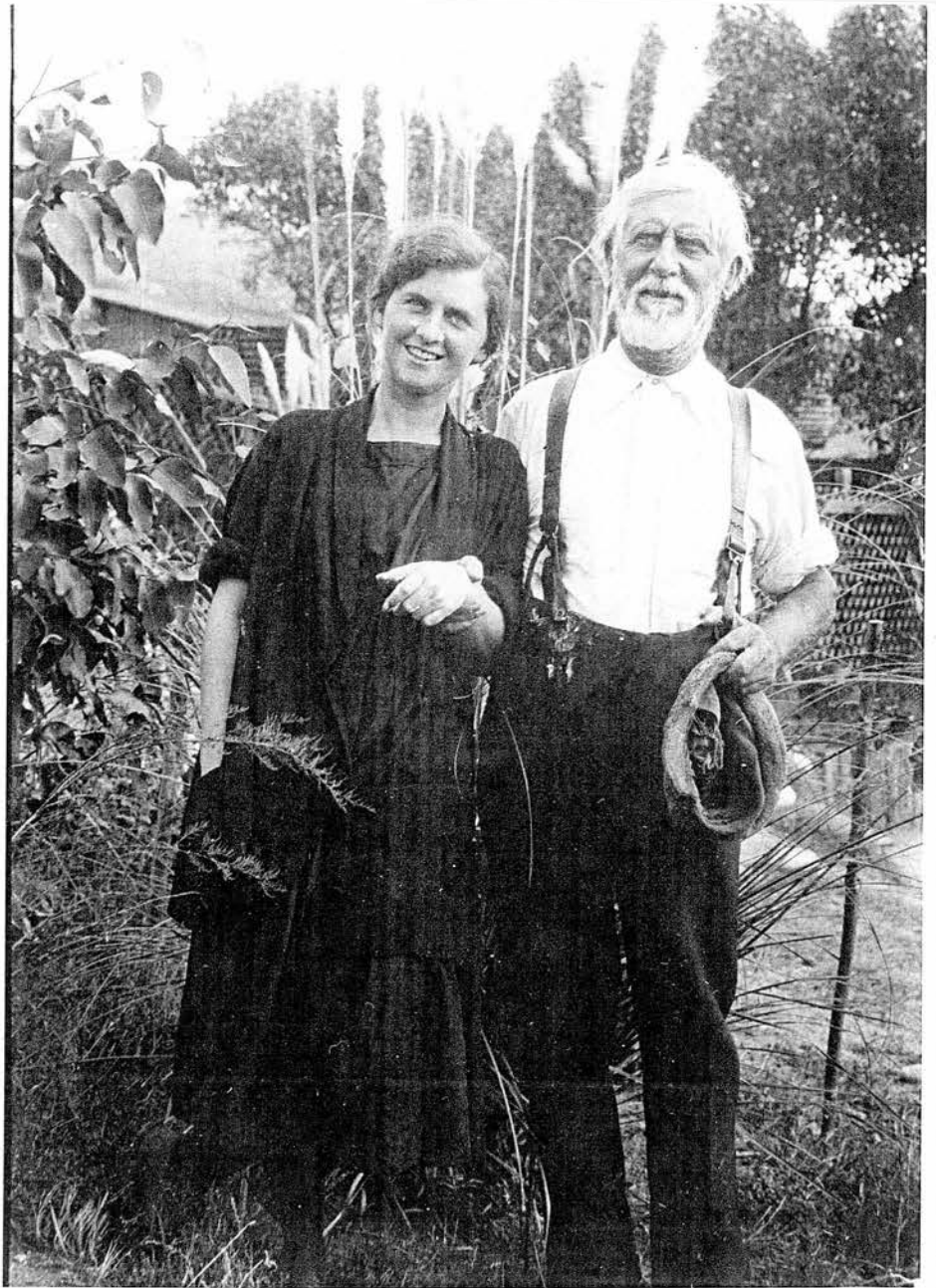


Plate 8. Joseph Booth, possibly taken in the 1920s at Llandudno (South Africa) with his daughter 'Peggy' Mary Winifred.

letter and on 28 August 1916 alerted the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

It would appear from correspondence recently intercepted here that Booth may still be in communication with natives of this country ...

The memorial or appeal has been most carefully prepared in its terms, but it breathes sedition and clearly suggests that the present time, when the forces of all parts of the Empire are being withdrawn for the 'deadly struggle' with Central Powers of Europe, is a propitious one for the natives of Africa to seek to recover by 'sanguinary methods' if necessary, their possession of the land and all rights and liberties of which they have been deprived under white rule."<sup>132</sup>

The MI5 authorities were eventually alerted by the Home Office to investigate the matter. Booth, seemingly undeterred, continued to make contacts with various liberal and Pro-African Lobby groups such as the 'London Federation of Brotherhoods'.<sup>133</sup>

However, between 1916 and 1917 Booth occupied himself with a series of jobs as gardener, butler, housekeeper, cook, until he found a permanent position at Tugill in York, in early 1919. And on June 1, 1919, Booth wrote his apologia at Staines in Buckinghamshire. He later requested to be allowed to return to South Africa. Evidently by the end of the year permission was granted, and he left with his wife to stay with Mary Winifred at her house at Llandudno, West of Cape Town in South Africa, where for a while he spent his time gardening and reading.

#### **BOOTH: HIS LAST YEARS 1920-1932**

In 1921, his wife, Annie Susan, died. Booth then married a school teacher, Lillian Webb. During this period of his stay in South Africa he began also to get in touch with his old acquaintances at Cape Town, in spite of his old age and the long distance from Llandudno. Booth's unsupervised political activities led to renewed police surveillance and thus created family tensions which made him leave South Africa for Britain for the last time.

During 1925 and 1930, Booth and his wife Lillian stayed at various places in the Midlands and West Country of England. In 1930, he seems to have carried out



Plate 9. The Milton Road Cemetery at Weston-Super-Mare (England) where Booth is buried.

his last engagement by launching an appeal on behalf of the ZIM. He wrote, "Owing to the failure of the crop, a sum of fully £5,000 is very urgently needed in order to continue the spiritual operation of the mission".<sup>134</sup>

Dorothy Casey, a retired SDA Bible Worker from Watford but now a resident of Weston-super-Mare, often visited the Booths and assisted them whenever possible. She later recalled that they did not have "any real Social life while in WSM, just lived very quietly. They lived for a time at Malvern, Hereford, Clarendon before settling in W S Mare".<sup>135</sup>

Booth died at his home (27 Clifton Road) at Weston-super-Mare on 4 November 1932 after a long illness.<sup>136</sup> He was buried at Milton Road Cemetery on 90 H Block<sup>137</sup> on 8 November after a private and simple funeral service conducted by a friend, a Mr Bacon. Lillian Booth wrote to her step-daughter Emily in America:

I knew darling chum [Joseph Booth] would wish it to be as simple and quiet as possible and we could not have had it more quietly and simply done than Mr Brewer [local Undertaker] did - he carried our wishes exactly - we left the house at 2.45 and had a little service at the cemetery Chapel. Mr Bacon taking it also at graveside - he made a beautiful prayer ... I think he felt it a privilege to do so, because he knew all about his work for missions and what darling Dad had given up for the work.<sup>138</sup>

It must be noted that not a single organization was represented except for a bouquet of flowers sent by ZIM then holding a council in London. Dorothy Casey wrote to Shepperson in 1954 and noted: "After all Jos Booth sacrificed, he sold everything, I believe to start the Zambezi Mission, and he lies here in W {Weston-super-Mare] forgotten".<sup>139</sup> And then added concerning the condition of the grave and the aftermath:

I'm the only one who ever goes to see if its fairly tidy. I'm semi invalid and can't cut grass or afford flowers, but I go and think of them sometimes. Mr Booth gave everything ... But its hard to end like that after giving all. There was no money for even a small memorial.<sup>140</sup>



Plate 10. Joseph Booth's unmarked grave (forefront) 90 H Block at Milton Road Cemetery (WSM). The writer has taken the initiative in consultation with Booth's relatives to have it marked. Note that his (third) wife Lillian is buried in the same grave.

Booth died in poverty, virtually forgotten by even the institutions he was instrumental in setting up. However, in spite of such an ending to a profound and dramatic life and career, it is now our task in the subsequent chapters to evaluate what he believed and stood for, particularly in British Central Africa and South Africa.

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137. See the Register of Burials at Ebdon Road, Worle, Weston-super-Mare.
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### CHAPTER III

#### JOSEPH BOOTH AND THE THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to assess Booth's theology of missions. Boeder, highly critical of Booth, considered his theology as "unremarkable", claiming that "he had no original ideas of his own".<sup>1</sup> However, we shall see that Booth's hermeneutical principle of Bible interpretation stemmed to a certain extent from the Baptist Christian tradition whose roots can be traced back to the revolutionary Anabaptists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century European Reformation.<sup>2</sup> Langworthy states that "although many nineteenth century missionaries started out with optimistic statements which were later diluted by experience in the field, in Booth's case experience strengthened and developed his basic vision of change".<sup>3</sup>

The article entitled 'The Greatest Work in the World - A Plea for Missionary Enterprise' published in the Missionary Review of the World in 1892 sets out markedly Booth's theological position on missions. The editor of the publication, A.T. Pierson, who valued its importance, commented that "The writer [Booth] of this has a right to be heard, for he has started for Africa to carry out in person his own convictions".<sup>4</sup> Shepperson and Price considered it as Booth's "first missionary manifesto", significant because it portrayed his "attitude of mind when he went into Africa".<sup>5</sup> But first we look into the main scriptural basis for his theology of mission.

## THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR MISSION

In Booth's view there were three scriptural proof-texts that formed the basis for his theology of mission. These he argued provided 'believers in the Lord Jesus Christ' with a mandate to go undeterred to proclaim the message of salvation to the heathen. He outlined them as follows:

'This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come'. (Matt. 24:14); and again more definitely after the resurrection His last words were, 'All authority hath been given me in heaven and on earth, go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations ... and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. [Matt. 28:18-20]'.<sup>6</sup>

It is written, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein' [Ps. 24:1].<sup>7</sup>

There is a striking similarity between Booth's main texts and those used by the Anabaptists during the Reformation era to support their theological position. Littell in his book The Anabaptist's View of the Church notes the following scriptural references as forming the foundation for their mission theology: Matthew 28, Mark 16 and Psalm 24<sup>8</sup>

Littell goes further to make the observation that "No texts appear more frequently than the above in the confessions of faith and court testimonies of the Anabaptists".<sup>9</sup> And he draws a contrast between Anabaptism "in conviction and type from the intact and stable ways of magisterial Protestantism".<sup>10</sup> We now turn to Booth's view regarding the Great Commission.

**OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL COMMISSION**

Joseph Booth's understanding of Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:18-20 was perceived from a spiritual perspective and the texts denoted:

Simply this, that if the trust is not yet discharged it is for us, the Christians of this generation, to rise up at once in the strength of the Lord and with loving obedience carry out His great parting command.<sup>11</sup>

There was seemingly a sense of urgency in Booth's statement for those he considered as "present-day Christians" to seriously take up the challenge of the Gospel Commission. The manpower or financial obstacles facing the missionary enterprise were surmountable "since Christ has 'all power', and He says, 'Go', and because He guarantees His presence to the end of time".<sup>12</sup> The Anabaptists also took a similar literal approach in their interpretation of the texts noted above. Their view of Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-18 according to Littell was that "The Master meant it to apply to all believers at all times".<sup>13</sup> It is essential to point out that "obedience to the Great Commission was definitive for Anabaptists in the sixteenth century".<sup>14</sup> They argued that the commission entrusted to them was not "Go forth and celebrate the mass, but go forth and preach the Gospel".<sup>15</sup> The emphasis placed on missions was so pronounced that the Taufer have been considered by some church historians as "forerunners of the modern missionary movements".<sup>16</sup>

Booth expressed concern regarding the Gospel Commission that it had become

"trite and almost powerless", arguing that a majority of Christians had failed to acknowledge in it "an utterance of the mightiest possible significance".<sup>17</sup> William Carey, the Baptist Missionary to India, a century before addressed the same question whether the Commission given by Christ to His disciples was still binding to all Christians. His response was as follows:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, a little before his departure, commissioned his apostles to Go, and teach all nations; [Matthew 28] or as another evangelist expresses it, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature [Mark 16]... They accordingly went forth in obedience to the command, and the power of God evidently wrought with them. Many attempts of the same kind have been made since their day.<sup>18</sup>

Like Booth, Carey also had expressed reservations that the Gospel Commission had "not been taken up, or prosecuted of late years (except by a few individuals) with that zeal and perseverance with which the primitive Christians went about it".<sup>19</sup> And so Booth sensing, its greater urgency during his time made the appeal:

Who is willing to hear the Lord say, 'As My Father sent me, even so send I you?' and again, 'I will make you fishers of men'? and yet again, 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit;? (John 15:16).<sup>20</sup>

We shall consider the Gospel Commission from a global perspective as Booth understood it.

## **BOOTH AND THE GOSPEL COMMISSION TO THE WORLD**

Booth attached great significance to the idea of universal mission. It may be

that in his view this area also provided the motivation for the launching of missionary enterprise in distant lands. The phrases "the whole world" [Matthew 24:14] and "All the nations" [Matthew 28:19] seem to imply in Booth's opinion a geographical area over which the Gospel was to be covered by those who proclaimed it. He noted this as meaning "to every kindred, tribe, and tongue".<sup>21</sup> Booth asserted "the work to be done is plain; 'the field is the world'".<sup>22</sup> This universal concept of mission according to Booth could also be traced in the Old Testament and he made the point when he added "God's purpose is plain, 'I will give Thee for a light unto the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the ends of the earth' [Isaiah 49:6]".<sup>23</sup>

The Anabaptists also believed that the Gospel Commission served "the sole purpose of making disciples of all peoples". The order was as follows: 1. going into all the world. 2. Expectation of a response from the hearers. 4. Baptizing the believers and finally, 5. Integration of the new adherents into the fellowship of the rest of members.<sup>24</sup> However, most Protestant Reformers vigorously opposed the Anabaptists' link between the Gospel Commission and the missionary obligation. Hogg makes the observation that "One searches in vain in the works of Martin Luther for any exposition of Matthew 28:19-20 or Mark 16:15 that would hint at the Church's responsibility to move beyond Christendom".<sup>25</sup> Addison confirms that:

Among Protestants, on the contrary, there was for a long time not only nothing accomplished but nothing attempted. For nearly two centuries the Churches of the Reformation were almost destitute of any sense of missionary vocation. The foremost leaders - men like Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Zwingli and Calvin - displayed neither missionary vision nor missionary spirit. While conceding in theory the universality

of Christianity, they never recognized it as a call to the Church of their day. Indeed some of them even interpreted 'Go ye into all the world' as a command already executed in the past and now no longer operative. And the very few thinkers who rejected this deadening view remained without influence.<sup>26</sup>

But as a Baptist, Booth seems to have adopted not only the Anabaptist universal view of mission but also Carey's whom he considered "the father of modern missions".<sup>27</sup> The latter's view was that "This commission was extensive as possible, and laid them under obligation to disperse themselves into every country of the habitable globe, and preach to all the inhabitants, without exception or limitation".<sup>28</sup>

It is significant, however, to point out that scholars have varied strikingly on this concept of the universality of the Gospel Commission. Heavenor seems to endorse Booth's choice of the Matthean texts (24:14 and 28:19a) as regards the theme of universal mission. He writes, "Matthew's universalism does not merely echo the universalism of other Gospel passages".<sup>29</sup> But Senior and Stuhlemueller take a slightly different view in that "This universal horizon of the kingdom metaphor is implicit in Mark but comes much closer to the surface in the mission theology of Matthew".<sup>30</sup> And as regards the two main proof-texts referred to by Booth earlier, they confirm that "to preach to 'all nations' in 28:19 (and 24:14, ... For Matthew, then, the church's mission to the Gentiles is not accident of history but a consequence of history: an intended act of God appropriate for the final age when the frontiers of salvation were expected to be pushed open to all nations".<sup>31</sup> Perhaps Booth set out for Africa envisaging that such providence was already being fulfilled in his day. He

wrote:

The advance guard of workers are waiting with untold reserves to follow ... The barriers to the Gospel are down or falling on every hand. The Christians of this generation have the knowledge, the men, the means, and the responsibility. All needed elements are, therefore, at our command to do the work if we have the will to apply them.<sup>32</sup>

But Adolf Harnack denied the authenticity of the Gospel Commission as a command from Jesus Christ. He believed that the universal mission idea was a later historical development. In his book Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten<sup>33</sup>, he wrote:

At the time when our gospels were written, a Lord and Saviour who had confined his preaching to the Jewish people without even issuing a single command to prosecute the universal mission, was an utter impossibility. If no such command had been issued before his death, it must have been imparted by him as the glorified One<sup>34</sup>

He then prefers to conclude that:

Therefore, it must be that Jesus never issued such a command at all, but that this version of his life was due to the historical developments of a later age, the words being appropriately put into the mouth of the risen Lord.<sup>35</sup>

And even goes so far as to allude that "Paul, too, knew nothing of such a general command".<sup>36</sup> But Harnack's assertion is refuted by James Moffat who assesses that "partly owing to its contents, partly to its omissions, Harnack's chapter (bk.i. Ch.4) on the universal outlook of Jesus is at once the most controversial and perhaps the least convincing in the volume".<sup>37</sup> But Harnack is not alone in all this. Even today missiologists such as Wilbert Shenk seem partly to share his view regarding the Gospel Command and its application to the universal mission. He argues:

The Great Commission has been misused when it has been seen as a proof-text. The Matthew 28:19a phrase, 'Go ye therefore', or Mark 16:15, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (KJV) were the basic texts. The imperative voice appealed to an activist people. Popular support rallied around a vision of conquering unknown territory, of pioneering on distant frontiers. Western culture applauded the hero who overcame hardship to win.<sup>38</sup>

Shenk thinks such an approach falls short of its fundamental aim and objective. "The Great Commission", he goes on, "gives no license for geographical exploration or preoccupation with the exotic elements of strange peoples in far away places. 'Go' is subservient to 'make'".<sup>39</sup> And indeed, recent scholarly work on this theme has taken a different turn. The current debate is whether "panta ta ethne in Matt.28:19 as 'all the nations', or perhaps better put 'all (the) peoples',<sup>40</sup> included Gentiles as well as the Jews in its universal application.<sup>41</sup> However, Booth targeted his mission to Africa and its peoples. He recalled later in life how a group of atheists in Melbourne, Australia, had first drawn his attention to the peoples of Central Africa.<sup>42</sup> His missionary activities among them will be assessed later in detail. But Booth claimed he had acted in response to Christ's "final orders 'go ye out to the uttermost parts of the earth - lo I am with you'".<sup>43</sup>

### **BOOTH AND PSALM 24:1 IN THE LIGHT OF TERRITORIAL MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE**

Joseph Booth used Ps.24:1 to underpin his theology of mission. The text reads "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein". Booth's question that followed in the text shows the importance he attached

to its interpretation and meaning. He asked, "Is this a mere figure of speech or is it a mighty eternal fact".<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to note that "This proof-text also appears frequently in the Anabaptist writings".<sup>45</sup> Booth's comment on Psalm 24:1 was as follows:

Our Saviour said, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light' [Luke 16:8] Certain it is that without a command from on high and without the Christian's title they take possession of the earth and its fulness, braving all dangers. Psalm 24:1 is the Christian's title to do this in the name of the rightful owner.<sup>46</sup>

Booth's reference to Luke 16:8 and Psalm 24:1 in the above statement raises a profound theological point that needs clarification. Although Booth is not explicit regarding their connection especially the former, one deduces an inference that the "children of this world" means secular governments or powers and the "children of light" means Christians in general. In order to appreciate Booth's line of reasoning, Luke 16:8 should be considered in the context of the entire parable of the steward that has gone before. Scholars comment that "The steward's cleverness is not an isolated phenomenon: it is part of the way of the world. The worldlings show far more savoir faire than the religious".<sup>47</sup>

The point of the Parable is that if a bad man will take infinite trouble to get friends for his own selfish interests, the good man will surely take some trouble to make friends in a better way and for better ends. The point of this saying is rather that by disposing wealth in the proper way, one will have treasure in heaven ...<sup>48</sup>

*of worldly?*

Booth's main object in referring to Luke 16:8 is to draw the reader's attention to the

subtle ways of the secular powers on one hand and the naive attitude of the so-called Christians who after all hold the entitlement in the "name of the rightful owner [God]".<sup>49</sup> His thoughts are clarified in his remarks regarding the role of the Imperialist or Colonial forces in foreign lands. He writes: "Is it to be the 'children of this world' who, without society aids or a 'Go ye,' will presently take possession, fill their pockets, button them up, degrade the native, and make the missionary's work the harder?"<sup>50</sup> What Booth seems to be contending with here is that if the secular government is bent to exploit and degrade poor people, what role should Christian societies or organizations be seen to do in order to change or reverse the sad picture? This brings us to the point of his inclination toward church independency. This congregational view of the Church that encouraged separation of the Church and state, was incorporated both in the Baptist and Anabaptist doctrine. For instance, the Anabaptists considered themselves as "cut loose from the world".<sup>51</sup> Littell continues:

At a time when dominant Protestantism was willing to commit 300 little states to a territorial determination of religion (Augsburg, 1555- 'cuius regio, eius religio') the Anabaptists were sending their missionaries where they could get a hearing, for 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof...' (Ps. 24:1), and no land should be forbidden to the proclamation of the Gospel ... They developed what we might call a 'concept of mobility' in analyzing their doctrine of the church and its world mission.<sup>52</sup>

Psalm 24:1 became the Anabaptists' *raison d'être*.<sup>53</sup> The Anabaptists urged their members once baptized to "go out as missionaries as Paul indicated, and the magistrate was not necessary in the matters of faith. 'The earth is the Lord's'".<sup>54</sup> Their prime argument was that "the church is universal, not hemmed in by national

or territorial limitations".<sup>55</sup> Regarding the Reformers and the religious territorial boundaries, Hogg makes this observation:

In 1555, thirty-eight stormy years after Luther (d.1546) posted his famous 'Ninety-five Theses', the Peace of Augsburg was drawn, incorporating the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* ('whose region, his religion'). The ruler of a territory determined its religion. For the first time in Western Christendom a church - the Lutheran - other than the Roman Catholic was given equal recognition in law. By 1555, Calvin (d.1564) had gained complete mastery in theocratic Geneva.<sup>56</sup>

While indeed most of the Reformers defended the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, the Anabaptists on the other hand insisted that "no earthly magistrate had the right to forbid God's missionaries from setting foot on their land for the earth was the Lord's (Ps. 24:1) ... Therefore God was to be obeyed and people disobeyed where such prohibition was demanded by orders or their mandates".<sup>57</sup> I would like to suggest that the row between Booth's Zambezi Industrial Mission, the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland's Blantyre Mission should be assessed against this background.

But first we do well to consider C.H. Spurgeon's interpretation of Ps.24:1. Booth referred to him as having remarked that Ps.24:1 "ought to put the work of missions on a very cheering footing".<sup>58</sup> Enthused by this statement, Booth's response was inevitable, "Let us go and take possession in the name of the Lord".<sup>59</sup> Spurgeon, like the Anabaptists, interpreted Ps.24:1 in missiological terms. In his book, The Treasury of David, he wrote, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof'. The whole round world is claimed for Jehovah, 'and they that dwell therein'

are declared to be his subjects".<sup>60</sup> And then Spurgeon cited the Jewish people's bigotry against other people during the time of Christ and also against Paul's mission to the gentiles.<sup>61</sup> And yet he argued they have "sung this Psalm [24.1] which shows so clearly that God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. What a rebuke is this to those wiseacres who speak of the negro and other despised races as though they were not cared for by the God of heaven".<sup>62</sup> And for those bent on restricting other people on territorial grounds, he said:

Man lives upon 'the earth', and parcels out its soil among his mimic kings and autocrats; but the earth is not man's. He is but a tenant at will, a leaseholder upon precarious tenure, liable to instantaneous ejection. The great Landowner and true Proprietor holds his court above the clouds, and laughs at the title-deeds of worms of dust. The fee-simple is not with the Lord of the manor nor the freeholder, but with the Creator. The 'fulness of the earth may mean its harvests, its wealth, its life, or its worship; in all these senses the Most High God is Possessor of all ... All nations are beneath his sway: true autocrat of all the nations, emperors and czars are but his slaves ... This claim [Ps. 24:1] applies to us who are born from heaven. We do not belong to the world ...<sup>63</sup>

It is not clear to how many of Spurgeon's other related works Booth had access. But his view on Ps. 24:1 as a Christian's entitlement entrusted by God seems to reflect the ideas of C.H. Spurgeon. Booth saw in this psalm a provision of the mandate "to develop Africa's vast pastoral, agricultural and mineral resources and rightly apply the earth's fulness God has stored there ... at the same time training the native to develop his own country and take his rightful place in the universe".<sup>64</sup>

## THE TERRITORIAL ROW BETWEEN ZAMBEZI INDUSTRIAL MISSION, THE MONTFORT FATHERS AND BLANTYRE MISSION

The rivalry between the Zambezi Industrial Mission and the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission began as early as 1892 "when Booth arrived at the commercial capital of Shire Highlands, the 'Mandala' stores and headquarters of the African Lakes Company in Blantyre".<sup>65</sup> Correspondence from Blantyre missionaries and a memorandum against Booth sent by Hetherwick to the Foreign Mission Committee in Scotland included as one of its chief complaints Booth "being too close to the longer-established mission".<sup>66</sup> Hetherwick wrote:

I need hardly point out the injury that such collision of missionary work is fated to do to the cause of Missions and the progress of the Church of Christ in the Shire Highlands. Mr Booth's aim has been to utilise the work and fruits of the Blantyre Mission in furtherance of his own scheme, and has thereby caused confusion in the native mind and much anxiety to the missionaries at Blantyre.<sup>67</sup>

Pachai makes the observation that Hetherwick's entire memorandum "became the forerunner of similar grievances listed by other missions against their rivals".<sup>68</sup> It is significant to recognise, however, that Blantyre Mission, like their counterparts in the north Livingstonia Mission, had been in British Central Africa for sixteen and seventeen years respectively. And thus the former established what Shepperson describes as an "informal missionary government".<sup>69</sup> He further suggests, "For over two decades the missionaries had had the field to themselves and successfully combined the functions of both Church and State. They had created stations, schools, transport, training institutions in crafts and light industries and, above all, a body of

native converts - some already active evangelists - as the nucleus of an African Church".<sup>70</sup> It is therefore my thesis, as noted earlier, that although not officially, Blantyre missionaries may have regarded the Shire Highlands as their territory on the lines of 'cuius regio, eius religio'.<sup>71</sup> It is therefore not surprising to note that the coming of a Baptist missionary such as Booth whom they described as "an enthusiast who recognized the discipline of no church"<sup>72</sup> should pose a threat to their mission activities. However, Shepperson and Price argue that the main problem was "the attitude towards him and his enterprise of some of the Scottish missionaries in Blantyre. They resented his intrusion into their sphere of work".<sup>73</sup> The Eastern Section of the F.M.C. of the Presbyterian Alliance convened a meeting on 4 January 1894 at which Dr McMurtree, A. Hetherwick, A.T. Niven and T.J. Wilson of the Church of Scotland met Joseph Booth and Robert Caldwell, both representing the ZIM, to discuss the territorial problem. A statement was issued after the conference which read as follows:

Messrs Booth and Caldwell agreed to transfer their principal station from the neighbourhood of Blantyre to near confluence of the rivers of Lisungwa [Lisungwi] and Shire. They further agreed, 'That the Z.I.M. dispose of their Mount Michiru plantation (their ground near Blantyre) to a separate ownership if possible; that, till this be done, they work this estate simply as a coffee plantation, and that in such case, the plantation being within the sphere of the Blantyre Mission, the Z.I.M. shall welcome the Blantyre missionaries in conducting thereon such religious and evangelistic services as these may think needful and possible, and give them every facility for such work'. The representatives of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland agreed to report favourably of this compromise.<sup>74</sup>

No sooner did the two parties reach the agreement that it was breached by ZIM. Booth wrote an article in The Christian journal in which he refuted such allegations.

Mr Lucas, echoing the fears expressed by Blantyre missionaries, acknowledged too that "there was far more than sufficient missionaries concentrated in Blantyre province for effective work without clashing with each other's operations (especially as diverse methods are adopted towards natives), unless very defined areas are decided on".<sup>75</sup> But Booth's rebuttal was that "In the flying visit made during October last by Mr Lucas, it could hardly be expected that he would fully grasp the position and enter into reasons why the Zambezi Industrial Mission should have chosen one out of their eight stations about five miles from the older station at Blantyre".<sup>76</sup> Although his explanation that the plan was "to purchase the freedom of the slaves in Angoniland, and bring them under Gospel influences"<sup>77</sup> delighted the FMC, this must be seen as an excuse and mere tactic. One cannot discount in all this Ps.24:1, which in Baptist terms sanctioned Christian people, let alone missionaries, to enter any territory of their wish without restrictions. The Church of Scotland authorities further showed dismay:

The Council of the Zambezi Industrial Mission have since, on 12th March 1894, declined to adhere to the agreement come to at the meeting of 4th January, and the Mission remains near Blantyre. It is to be regretted that this Mission, with wide Africa before it, should settle in the Church of Scotland's Mission-field - very far from the Zambezi. Its promoters cannot complain if it seems to many that they are seeking immediate results by the process of entering on other men's labours, where the Church of Scotland has prepared the way at great cost in money and precious lives.<sup>78</sup>

The issue of delimiting boundaries into parishes did not only affect Booth's ZIM, because there were also clashes between BM and RC missionaries in Blantyre area. During the Commission of Inquiry, Napier complained that "The Roman Catholic

Church has started Missions in this country practically ignoring the existence of other forms of Christian work. Geographically, that is easily proved, by examining the places where they have started their work".<sup>79</sup> Pachai also makes the observation that in 1901 when the Monfort Fathers first appeared in Blantyre, they were summoned by the chairperson of the BM Council "to persuade them not to begin work in the Blantyre district but to adopt as their sphere of work the country beyond the Shire River westward from Chikwawa".<sup>80</sup> The co-operation was minimal and thus further conflicts were not alleviated or resolved.<sup>81</sup> Pachai adds, "These two missions even clashed over who should be allowed to re-start mission work from the ruins of Chilembwe's church in 1915".<sup>82</sup>

### **BOOTH AND THE MISSION THEOLOGY OF BELIEVER'S BAPTISM**

The arrival of Joseph Booth in the Shire Highlands caused a stir among missionaries and also other European settlers in the area. Apart from the charge drawn against Booth for establishing his mission close to Blantyre, the mission authorities raised other issues regarding his conduct, which we now intend to evaluate. The other charges can be categorized as follows: 1. Booth's mode and meaning of Believer's Baptism, 2. His proselytizing, and 3. Booth's qualification to administer the rite of baptism. In 1893, a statement was published in Life and Work which alleged:

Several boys from our own school at Chilomoni's have been lately baptized by immersion by Mr. Booth. We pass over the very serious charge that he is not in the eyes of the Churches in Scotland or England authorized to administer the sacrament of baptism, his claim from the imposition of the hands of Dr

Pierson in Spurgeon's Tabernacle (although perhaps sufficient for eldership) being insufficient for the administration of the sacraments ... The boys baptized were all our own scholars, who up to Mr. Booth's arrival and dealing with them had been taught and educated in our own school. One of them, Gordon, was actually taken from Mission employ ... would not we believe be tolerated by those at home who send him (if he be thus sent), were the facts really made known.<sup>83</sup>

When one goes through the writings of Booth little is found on the study of the theology of baptism.<sup>84</sup> And yet there seems to be clear evidence that he followed the Baptist or Anabaptist mode of baptism. The doctrine of adult baptism by dipping the believer in the water was even incorporated in the Nyassa Industrial Mission constitution, in the formulation of which Booth may have assisted. It required all its employees to profess "The observance of Believer's Baptism".<sup>85</sup> As regards Booth's practice, Shepperson affirms that "he preached baptism as the 'open sesame' to the status of church membership".<sup>86</sup> And in Independent African, Shepperson and Price write regarding Chilembwe's baptism "Knowing Booth's practice at this time, it would seem that this was a form of baptism by total immersion, possibly in a river".<sup>87</sup> Booth may have been considered the first missionary who officially introduced baptism by immersion, a rite about which the Church of Scotland expressed reservations and concern because of its effect on the Africans. It should also be noted, however, that in order to minimize tension among the missionary workers and Booth, a conciliatory approach was adopted by BM especially to those Africans who insisted on wanting baptism by immersion.

Regarding the question of baptism we quite understand how some people believe in adult baptism. We do, and practice it here. Sonje was an adult. We believe also in infant baptism, and this latter does not invalidate our

argument for the former. We are also willing, in case of any one finding in his conscience that he must be immersed, to perform the ceremony [sic] by immersion.<sup>88</sup>

It must be noted, however, that in spite of taking such a step, the Blantyre missionaries did not let the matter rest there. They went on to express their theological position on the subject of baptism. They wrote:

We believe that the early Church method was to baptize by pouring water on the applicant's head. Generally the applicant would be standing in the stream, and we have thus the double symbolism of the flood from beneath and the cloud above, as in the flood and the coming of the Red Sea, both of which incidents are referred to in the New Testament as symbol of baptism.

The early church pictures and ancient allusions bear this out.<sup>89</sup>

The statement went on to give their interpretation of the mode and the meaning of the images in the early church.

But further, the point to emphasize is not the drowning (that the Antediluvian, and the Egyptians experienced) but the deliverance, and no method could better express this than our own Church method of sprinkling with the sign in the presence of the congregation.

But then issued a caution:

The early need at times of emphatic separation from heathenism and the modern separation which unchristianizes all except very few, go to lengths which introduce an erroneous psychology, apparent at once to all instructed thoughtfulness.<sup>90</sup>

It is not clear whether the above statement was a measure taken to directly refute Booth's teaching on baptism, but one cannot completely rule out that possibility out.

The NIM constitution laid emphasis on "Cordial acceptance and submission to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the supreme authority in all questions of faith and practice".<sup>91</sup> The scriptural passages cited were frequently used or referred to in the Baptist and Anabaptist faith. Point no. 27 on "Baptism illustrated by Events recorded in the Old Testament"<sup>92</sup> expressed the Baptist theological view on the texts. Like BM, they acknowledged that the word 'baptized' was used by the apostle Paul in a figurative sense.<sup>93</sup> but then argued, "if it has a reference to the mode, we have only to ask, Does the situation of the Jews, 'IN the cloud, and IN the sea,' best agree to sprinkling with water, or a total burial in it?".<sup>94</sup> The Baptist interpretation in support of the immersion preferred Whitby's which stated "both the cloud and the sea had some resemblance to our being covered with water in baptism. Their going into the sea resembled the ancient rite of going into the water; and their coming out of it, their rising up out of the water".<sup>95</sup> And in reference to I Peter 3:20, 21 they believed that the analogy was figurative but then added "In this case baptism is 'The answer of a good conscience toward God' ... If the exercise of 'a good conscience' is associated with the ordinance of baptism, in none but a believer in Christ can this union be realised".<sup>96</sup> This interpretation was similar to that of the Anabaptists in the 16th Century who also argued "By this passage of Peter, the baptism of believers is again clearly affirmed, and the baptism of infants repudiated. For it is clearly impossible that anyone can have a good conscience except he who believes and whose heart is regenerate and converted".<sup>97</sup> But during this same period, the established Protestant leaders noted "That also children ought to be baptized; who, thro' such Baptism, are delivered up unto God, and becoming

pleasing to him. Therefore we blame those who teach, that the Baptism of Infants is unbecoming".<sup>98</sup> By 1530, the Augsburg Confession did not only endorse the above statement but also made the following observation:

As to Anabaptism, the Case is in Fact so altered, that, among many thousand Persons of the Baptist Persuasion, there are exceeding few Anabaptists now left; and yet this last-mentioned Principle, tho' rare, has been followed and contended for even in our Time after so notorious a manner by our Adversaries, purely because they could hurt us by it, that the Civil Magistrates was obliged to interpose in some Places, and restrain the Excesses of such Donatistical Novelties.<sup>99</sup>

The clash between the Blantyre Mission and the ZIM was not simply a matter of mission comity. In many ways it was a modern version of the clash between Anabaptist groups and the Magisterial Reformers. The Blantyre Mission did lay claim to Southern Malawi in a way that a mission like the ZIM, with its spiritual roots leading back to the Anabaptists, could not accept.

Another charge made against Booth by BIM was that in spite of repeated warnings he had been "still proselytizing",<sup>102</sup> and also refused to remove his mission station away from "within five miles from Blantyre Church door".<sup>103</sup> The BM leaders alleged they had "a clear case of sectarian proselytism" and queried "Do those who represent and manage this mission [ZIM] at home support their agent out here in such action".<sup>104</sup> The Blantyre missionaries cited: "Many of those baptized have been educated in our out-schools like those who some time ago were taken away from our Chilomoni school and baptized by Mr. Booth".<sup>105</sup> The solution to the problem seemed to be for both parties to reach some form of agreement. Booth and his co-workers would be permitted to keep the station as a stop-in house when en

route to or from their own established territory. This offer was on condition that they renounce completely the habit of proselytism. The statement read:

Such a transit station could be an experience - gaining halting-place, a rest house for the tired-out worker or the fevered frame, and if a coffee garden flourished round about them it would be only a help to all. But they would have to forswear proselytism re-baptism, labour bribes and other hindrances to the established work of others which the heads of the Mission seem still to make their avowed policy, and that in closest proximity to our station.<sup>106</sup>

Booth and his band of workers seem to have rejected the suggestion put to them and hence the complaint that followed: "The station here is not removed, nor the land sold ... having as many as 1,000 workers on at a time".<sup>107</sup> However, Shepperson offers the following possible reasons for the whole saga. In his article 'The Politics of African Church Separatist Movements in British Central Africa, 1892-1916' he points out that "Booth spent his own capital and much of others in this work: because of this, as well as his own radicalism, he was able to pay higher wages to his African workers than the missions and trading companies in the Protectorate".<sup>108</sup> And also that "instead of the long period of probation [2-4 years] demanded by the older missions, it was not long before numbers of converts from them came over to him".<sup>109</sup> And primarily because of this, he concludes "It did not endear these missions to Booth".<sup>110</sup> One of the great problems that initially held back the growth of the Blantyre and Livingstonia missions was the very long period of training demanded before baptism could be administered. In contrast to Blantyre and Livingstonia, Booth as a Baptist followed the tradition that allowed candidates to be baptized on a clear profession of faith, not dependent on a specific period of time

spent as a catechumen.<sup>111</sup> Booth's reaction is also noted by Shepperson whom he sees as expressing "his own criticisms of Blantyre and Livingstonia missionaries in no uncertain terms".<sup>112</sup> He wrote:

Candidly now, is it not marvellous thing to see elegantly robed men, at some hundreds of pounds yearly cost, preaching a gospel of self-denial to men and women ... compelled to work hard from daylight to dark six, but more often seven, days in a week, for calico costing five pence per week the men and two pence half penny the women ... Either we ought to stop spreading the gospel or conform to its teaching amidst such a ready cloud of witnesses as Central Africa presents.<sup>113</sup>

There is another aspect: Africans such as John Chilembwe, who claimed to have read the Bible for themselves and drew their own conclusion on the question regarding baptism. In the case of Chilembwe, Shepperson and Price cite that it was believed:

he had remained outside the Blantyre Mission for two years because he had read in St. Matthew's Gospel that Jesus was baptized in a river, the Jordan; and from this Chilembwe had conceived the belief that baptism meant something more than the sprinkling of water on the head. The arrival of the total immersing Booth was, then, very propitious for him.<sup>114</sup>

In the same way as did Sonje, who failed to turn up for his baptism when all the arrangements had been finalized, BM welcomed the explanation such as the one above with skepticism. Their main contention was that "Of course the usual pretext was there that the lad saw for himself that he should be dipped - but what he did see was, that it was more to his interest to obey the new master he had gone to, than to obey those to whom he owed his education and enlightenment".<sup>115</sup> But most of Booth's African followers read the Bible and translated it in a literal sense arguing

that baptism was by immersion into the water. It was not only viewed in the light of the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan but of stories such as that of the Ethiopian Eunuch baptized by Philip, which created interest and scenes they could identify with in African terms.

We now address the issue over which the Church of Scotland missionaries expressed great reservation, that of Booth's qualification to administer baptism. As noted earlier, his claim to have received his ordination from "the imposition of the hands of Dr Pierson in Spurgeon's Tabernacle"<sup>116</sup> was considered by BM as inadequate and therefore not recognized by the Established Churches of Scotland and England. They in fact hesitantly acknowledged this to have been enough for eldership, but certainly not for a Gospel minister or missionary. It is interesting to discover that in 1856, C.H. Spurgeon, the Baptist leader at the Tabernacle, strongly opposed the notion of ordination by the imposition of hands. It was in the same church that Dr Pierson also presided as its associate minister. Spurgeon seemed suspicious of how the ordination was performed, even among the dissenters. He queried:

Whence comes the whole paraphernalia of 'ordination' as observed among some Dissenters? Since there is no special gift to bestow, why in any case the laying on of empty hands? Since we cannot pretend to that mystic succession so much vaunted by Ritualists, why are men styled 'regularly-ordained ministers' ... Is not the Divine call the real ordination to preach, and the call of the church the only ordination to the pastorate?<sup>117</sup>

Manley's assessment of Spurgeon's attitude towards ordination by laying on of hands

was that it was "reacting strongly to the 'Ritualists' of the Oxford Movement" and he added that it "needs no elaboration".<sup>118</sup> It is interesting to note that Spurgeon's view at this time reflected an earlier notion held by the Church of Scotland, although for a short period. The 'First Book of Discipline' (1560) stipulated:

We judge it expedient that the admission of Ministers be in open audience, that some special Minister make a Sermon touching the duty and office of Ministers, touching their manners, conversation and life ... Other ceremonie then the publick approbation of the people and declaration of the chiefe minister, that the person there presented is appointed to serve the Church, wee cannot approve, for albeit the Apostles used imposition of hands, yet seeing the miracle is ceased, the using of the ceremonie we judge not necessarie.<sup>119</sup>

However, it must be borne in mind that in 1571 the General Assembly passed a motion calling for the imposition of hands to be exercised for its ministers. This was confirmed in the Second Book of Discipline (1578) that "Ordination is the separation and sanctifying of the person appointed to God and his Kirk, after he be well tryed and found qualified. The Ceremonies of ordination are fasting, earnest prayer, and imposition of hands of the eldership".<sup>120</sup>

Spurgeon summed up his ceremonial view of how ordination was to be conducted in the Tabernacle as follows: "The ordination prayer should be prayed in the church-meeting, and there and then the work should be done; for the churches to recognize the act, is well and fitting, but not if it be viewed as needful to the completion of the act itself".<sup>121</sup> That Spurgeon may not only have been following the Baptist view can be deduced also in the manner the Anabaptists of the 16th Century commissioned

both its leaders and laity. It is known that a special prayer only provided them with the mandate to go out and baptize as missionaries.<sup>122</sup> However, what is not clear is whether ordination by the imposition of hands at Spurgeon's Tabernacle was in force by 1892 when Joseph Booth was in England. And hence his ordination status as a fully fledged missionary with authorization to baptize led to his being accepted by organizations he associated with, mainly those from Britain and America. Nonetheless the Blantyre Mission leaders insisted that "Baptist bodies cannot urge the plea that the immerser must himself have been immersed, for this is as patent a case of 'succession' as any Apostolic succession could be. The historical succession of baptism by immersion breaks completely down but a little way back".<sup>123</sup>

## **ESCHATOLOGY AND JUDGEMENT -**

### **A MOTIVE FOR MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE**

The themes of eschatology and judgement were associated in Booth's theology of mission. God's judgement would fall hard on Christians who did not respond to the Gospel Commission. His opinion was that "The greatest work in the world' is that marked out by the Lord Jesus Christ to be accomplished by his followers between His ascension and His return".<sup>124</sup> Booth envisaged the missionary enterprise as a task that needed to be accomplished before Christ's 'return'. However, he expressed concern that "After eighteen centuries it is far from complete; an utterance, indeed, that may yet have power to rise up in judgement against us".<sup>125</sup> It might have been from such an understanding of the theology of missions that he developed an extraordinary sense of urgency in his attempt to accelerate the work of missions

before the return of Christ to earth. Although Langworthy's assertion was that "Patience was not one of Booth's virtues",<sup>126</sup> I consider that Booth must be assessed against the background and mood of his time. Van Den Berg states "There exists an important connection between the missionary awakening and the eschatological expectations of the group in which the awakening took its beginning".<sup>127</sup> He further adds:

As a whole, contemporary eschatology worked in favour of the missionary awakening; the ground work was prepared by it, and new enthusiasm took possession of men and women all over Britain, who saw in the incipient missionary work one of the most important signs of the dawn of millennium.<sup>128</sup>

Similarly, eschatological leanings can be traced even in the mission theology of the Anabaptists of the 16th and 17th centuries. Littell asserts that there was "in their church view an eschatological accent not found as prominently in the dominant groups".<sup>129</sup> Graber also confirms that "without a doubt this eschatological element in the concept of the church was a strongly motivating force in witness and evangelism".<sup>130</sup> Like Booth, it would seem, the Anabaptists frequently referred to Matthew 24:13, 14 and Matthew 28:18-20<sup>131</sup> as scriptural texts that underpinned their eschatological view of missions.

It is also interesting to find in recent literature ideas that were close to those of Booth on the influence of eschatology and missions. Cullmann writes:

The genuine primitive Christian hope does not paralyze Christian action in the world. On the contrary, the proclamation of the Christian Gospel in the

missionary enterprise is a characteristic form of such action, since it expressed the belief that 'missions' are an essential element in the eschatological divine plan of salvation. The missionary work of the church is the eschatological foretaste of the kingdom of God, and the Biblical hope of the 'end' constitutes the keenest incentive to action.<sup>132</sup>

What one observes is the similarity between Cullmann's interpretation and that of Booth. The former also employed Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:18-20<sup>133</sup> as textual proofs to support his argument. However, scholars have varied strikingly over the theme of eschatology as a motive for missionary activity. Bosch noted that "Martin Kähler had already rejected the view that Matt. 24:14 prompts us to do mission work so as to hasten Christ's return. Missionaries who hold these views, Kähler said, do not really aim at Christianising the nations; they rather want to preach the gospel 'as a witness' to them so that they might have no excuse".<sup>134</sup> But again we see that Booth's initial interpretation of Matthew 24:14 on eschatology in relationship to the work of missions is supported by Matthey, who comments "The 'end of the world' is not expected to come soon. At the same time, the mention of that end which is to come is a relativization of mission and of the Church because its time is the time 'between' resurrection and parousia".<sup>135</sup>

Booth, as noted earlier, also associated with judgement the failure to carry out the work of missions as commanded. In his missionary manifesto, he reiterated "Let us remember that the blood of over fifty thousand heathen, dying daily without the knowledge of God, will rest upon this generation if we neglect to rise with a mighty purpose to the work He has given us the privilege and responsibility of doing (Read

Prov. 24:11, 12; Ezek. 3:18.)".<sup>136</sup> But Allen in his book Missionary Principles vigorously refutes such a notion by setting forth the argument that "Missionary zeal so grounded is wholly independent of any doctrine of condition of the souls of the heathen men after death. Many men have been spurred to missionary labours by the believe that countless souls of men every hour were passing to an eternity of woe... Missionary zeal is not really dependent on any such doctrine".<sup>137</sup> However, it would seem it was Booth's notion that the eschatological signs of the end of the world and judgement to come provided missionary enthusiasts with the necessary motivation to Christianize the heathen.

#### **BOOTH: HIS THEOLOGICAL AIM AND BASIS FOR INDUSTRIAL MISSION**

We considered in Chapter II the socio-economic background of Industrial Mission with special reference to Booth's ideology in Central and Southern Africa. In this section, we look at the same theme from a theological perspective. Booth often argued in his writings that there was no dichotomy between the spiritual and the secular. He even traced the origins of Industrial Mission in Pauline theology of mission. He wrote; "The Apostle Paul, who knew something of the work to be done, approved and adopted this method for the missionary's work of breaking up the fallow ground, and continued it during the early stages of church life".<sup>138</sup> To underline his theological view on Industrial Mission, Booth used Pauline texts "as recorded in 2 Thess. 3:8, 9; I Cor. 3:11, 12".<sup>139</sup> He argued that in theological terms, the industrial mission ideology enabled foreign missionaries to associate with Africans on an equal basis while at the same time providing the latter with training

in different skilled jobs. It is for this reason that he urged fellow workers in positions of influence to "aim not only at the conversion of the natives, but at training and educating the young; forming new and industrious habits, taking on stations to work side by side with white men, that they may realize 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren'".<sup>140</sup> John Driver in his article on 'Paul and Mission' takes a similar view as Booth when he states: "Communication of the gospel in propositional as well as exemplary forms blend together in Paul's missionary methodology".<sup>141</sup> And particularly in reference to II Thess. 3:7-9 used by Booth, he asserts:

Apparently the recipients of the Pauline mission understood from the beginning the fact that Paul's observable activity in their midst was not neutral. His example, even in the seemingly ordinary affairs of life, carried the gospel meaning ... (II Thess. 3:7-9; c.f. Eph. 4:28). These representative passages point to the fundamental role of Paul's example in his missionary methodology ... Of course Paul also expected that other missionaries would use the same methodology ... Paul was not content merely to witness to Christ's life in general, but he demonstrated certain specific traits and characteristics in Jesus' life.<sup>142</sup>

This attitude of Booth's, although paralleled to some degree by certain missionaries, e.g. David Clement Scott of Blantyre, is in clear contrast to that of most whites, even 'liberals'. For example, Lord Lugard, a leading white administrator, who did believe in the 'betterment' of Africans, wrote thus:

One word as regards missionaries themselves. The essential point in dealing with Africans is to establish a respect for the European. Upon this - the prestige of the white man - depends his influence, often his very existence, in Africa. If he shows his surroundings, and by his assumption of superiority, that he is far above the native, he will be respected, and his influence will be proportionate to the superiority he assumes and bears out by his higher

accomplishments and mode of life. In my opinion - at any rate with reference to Africa - it is the greatest possible mistake to suppose that a European can acquire a greater influence by adopting the mode of life of the natives. In effect, it is to lower himself to their plane, instead of elevating them to his. The whole influence of the European in Africa is gained by this assertion of a superiority which commands the respect and excites the emulation of the savage. To forego this vantage ground is to lose influence for good. I may add, the loss of prestige consequent on what I should term the humiliation of the European affects not merely the missionary himself, but is subversive of all efforts for secular administration ... He must at all times assert himself, and repel an insolent familiarity ... His dwelling-house should be as superior to those of the natives as he is himself to them.<sup>143</sup>

This approach as a means of dealing with Africans was a pattern followed by some missionary societies in running their industrial missions. It was a method Booth had not only objected to but denounced even among his colleagues in the ZIM. However more of his radical views will be dealt with in Chapter VI. But suffice it to say that his theology of industrial mission served to encourage the social and physical development of the indigenous people.

Such an assertion does not mean that he had reduced his deep religious commitment in any way. On the contrary his whole purpose was to "train and cultivate native converts' spiritual gifts, and lead to self-reliant action in preaching and planting industrial missions in the 'regions beyond'".<sup>144</sup> This view also seems to have been held by Paul and other apostles in their missionary work. Driver states that Paul especially served "in order not to be a burden while preaching the gospel, was simply a part of the way in which Paul communicated 'kingdom living' in his mission ... Paul makes it clear that his practice of self-support was essential to his communication of the gospel".<sup>145</sup> And regarding the apostles, Moffat points out "The apostles had not been idle or hare-brained enthusiasts, and their example of an

orderly, self-supporting life is held up as a pattern ...".<sup>146</sup> A. Hetherwick told the Commission of Inquiry that Booth had come into the country with the intention "to promulgate a vast scheme for self-supporting, and from every station would go another station, that is each in turn to produce another station spreading them all over the country ... to cover the whole of Africa in a century".<sup>147</sup> In the final analysis, Booth perceived industrial mission to be rooted in the New Testament.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, Independent African (Edinburgh, 1958), p.423.
3. Harry W. Langworthy III, 'Joseph Booth, Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa 1891-1915' Journal of Religion in Africa XVI, 1 (1986), p.26.
4. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World - A plea for Missionary Enterprise', The Missionary Review of the World, V, 1892, p.573.
5. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, op. cit. p.25.
6. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.573.
7. Ibid. p.577.
8. Franklin H. Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church (Starr King Press, 1958), p.109. Although the Anabaptists used Mark 16:15, 16 and Joseph Booth Matthew 24:14, the main thrust of their message was basically the same.
9. Ibid. And for a good historical background and definition regarding Anabaptists see one of the latest works by J. Denny Weaver, Becoming Anabaptist (Ontario, 1987).
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11. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.574.
12. Ibid.
13. Franklin H. Littell, 'The Anabaptist Theology of Mission' IN Wilbert R. Shenk [ed.] Anabaptism and Mission (Scottsdale, Herald Press, 1984), p.19. See also Franklin H. Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church, Op. Cit. p.111. "The proof text appeared repeatedly in Anabaptist sermons and apologetic writing. Confessions of faith and court testimonies gave it a central place, and the series of questions prepared by various authorities for use in court indicates that the governments expected it to be of prime importance in Anabaptist argument. 'Our faith stands on nothing other than the command of Christ (Matthew 28, Mark 16)'".

14. Ibid. p.7; Franklin H. Littel, The Anabaptist View of the Church, Op. Cit. p.112 states, "Not only was the missionary mandate obeyed most seriously, but it was given sweeping application. It applied to all Christians at all times ... the Anabaptists were among the first to make the Commission binding upon all church members".
15. Ibid. p.19.
16. Franklin H. Littel, The Anabaptist View of the Church, Op. Cit. p.113.
17. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.574.
18. William Carey, An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen (Leicester, 1792), pp.7-8. Booth considered William Carey as "the father of modern missions". See 'The Greatest Work in the World' Op. Cit. p.574.
19. Ibid. p.8.
20. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.575.
21. Ibid. p.574.
22. Ibid. p.575.
23. Ibid.
24. Hans Kasdorf, 'The Anabaptist Approach to Mission'. IN Wilbert R. Shenk, [ed.] Anabaptism and Mission. Op. Cit. p.52. Also Chapter I in this book, p.19.
25. William Richey Hogg, 'The Rise of Protestant Missionary Concern, 1517-1914' IN Gerald H. Anderson [ed.], The Theology of the Christian Mission (London, 1961), p.98. Hogg adds: "Similarly, one searches John Calvin's Institutes and commentaries without finding any positive recognition of a theology of missions. Examination of Zwingli, Bucer, John Knox, and Melanchthon produces the same negative report".
26. James Thayer Addison, The Christian Approach to the Moslem - A Historical Study (New York, 1966), p.66. See also Franklin H. Littel, The Anabaptist View of the Church... Op. Cit. p.114.
27. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.574.
28. William Carey. Op. Cit. p.8.
29. E.S.P. Heavenor, 'The Eschatological Motive for World Mission in the New Testament' (PhD degree thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1962) p.23.

30. Donald Senior and Carrol Stuhmueller, The Biblical Foundation for Mission (London, 1983), p.238.
31. Ibid. p.240.
32. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op.Cit. p.575.
33. A. Harnack, Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Chrstentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten (Leipzig, 1902), pp.27-28.
34. Adolf Harnack, The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the first three Centuries, Translated and edited by James Moffat (London, 1908), vol.1, pp. 40-41.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. James Moffat, 'Harnack's Ausbreitung' The Hibbert Journal, A Quarterly Review of Religion, Theology and Philosophy, Vol.I, 1903, p.581.
38. Wilbert R. Shenk, 'The Great Commission' IN Wilbert R. Shenk [ed.] Mission Focus Current Issues (Ontario, 1980), p.42.
39. Ibid. pp. 42-43.
40. John P. Meier, 'Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?' The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol.XXXIX, 1977, p.94.
41. The recent literature available on this subject is as follows:  
Jacques Matthey, 'The Great Commission According to Matthew' International Review of Mission, Vol.LXIX (274) 1980, 161-173. He takes the view that "All the nations' here means all nations of the earth, including the Jews". p.168. But Douglas R.A. Hare and Daniel J. Harrington in their article 'Make Disciples of all the Gentiles' (Mt.28:19) (The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol.XXXVII, 1975, 350-369) argue that "those who maintain the inclusive interpretation of Matt.28:19 must concede that if Matthew intended to convey the idea 'all nations including Israel' his choice of expression was unfortunate". p.368.
42. Joseph Booth, 'Other Calls' Mss C154/8-8n.p.9. Shepperson Collection.
43. Ibid.
44. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op.Cit. p.577.
45. Wilbert R. Shenk, [ed.] Anabaptism and Mission, (Scottdale, 1984), p.231.

46. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op.Cit. pp.577-8.
47. H.D.A. Major, T.W. Manson, C.J. Wright, The Mission and Message of Jesus - An Exposition of the Gospels in the Light of Modern Research (London, 1940), p.584.
48. Ibid. pp.584-5
49. Joseph Booth, 'The Great Work in the World...' p.578.
50. Ibid.
51. Franklin H. Littel, 'The Anabaptist Theology of Mission ...' Op. Cit. p.17.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p.15. See also Lydia Müller, Glaubenzeugnisse Oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter (Leipzig, 1938), who quotes Jacob Hutter's (the Anabaptist) use of Psalm 24:1, "Furthermore we want to let you know that this time you cannot evict us nor can we go. God our heavenly Lord will show us where we should go! Likewise you cannot forbid us land (territory) and soil <lit. We cannot allow you to forbid us>, for the earth and everything in it belongs to our God who is in heaven. Further, even if we promised you to leave and had planned it in our hearts, we might not keep our word for we are in the hand of God who is dealing with us as it pleases him". p.163 [Translation by Olaf Kuhr].
54. Franklin H. Littel, The Anabaptist View of the Church Op. Cit. p.121.
55. J.D. Graber, 'Anabaptism Expressed in Missions and Social Service' IN Guy F. Hershberger [ed.], The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottsdale, 1957), p.165.
56. William Richey Hogg, 'The Rise of Protestant Missionary Concern, 1517-1914' Op. Cit. p.97.
57. Leonard Gross, 'Sixteenth-Century Hutterian Mission' IN Wilbert R. Shenk, Anabaptism and Mission Op. Cit. p.111.
58. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World' Op. Cit. p.577.
59. Ibid.
60. C.H. Spurgeon, The Treasury of David (London, 1871) vol.I Ps.I-XXVI, p.422. Spurgeon quoted other works on Ps.24:1, such as John Boys, An Exposition of the Proper Psalmes in our English Liturgie ... (London, 1638), p.909. And also: John Spencer, Things New and Old ... (London, 1657), p.254.

61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid; pp. 422-3.
64. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World ...' Op. Cit. p.578.
65. George Shepperson and Thomas Price. Op. Cit. p.32.
66. B. Pachai, 'The State and the Churches in Malawi During Early Protectorate Rule' Journal of Science, Vol.I, 1972, p.18.
67. Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland, - Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee, 1894, p.126. See also Life and Work in British Central Africa, 1893, (No.70), which states: "There is scope enough for any amount of energy, there is absolutely untrodden ground and yet the workers are not so far away that call for help and counsel cannot reach willing ears and bring quickly willing hands to their help. Unfortunately that sponging Mission the ZIM has followed our workers and has planted its station in this same small group just four miles away". p.4. See also Thomas Nicol, 'Zambezi Industrial Mission' The British Weekly, 16 September 1893.
68. B. Pachai, Op. Cit. p.18.
69. G.A. Shepperson, 'The Politics of African Church Separatist Movements in British Central Africa', Africa XXIV (3), (London, International African Institute, 1954), p.233.
70. Ibid., pp. 233-4.
71. William Richey Hogg, Op. Cit. p.97. See also Franklin H. Littel, The Anabaptist Theology of Mission p. 17.
72. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, Op. Cit. p. 32.
73. Ibid. See also Life and Work in British Central Africa, 1894, (No.76) p. 2.
74. Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland - Minutes Op. Cit. pp. 126-7.
75. William Lucas, 'A Visit to Central Africa' The Christian (London), 1894, p.16. Note that Lucas was an Australian touring BCA at the time.
76. Joseph Booth, 'Zambezi Industrial Mission' Op. Cit. p.22.
77. Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland. Op. Cit. p.127.
78. Ibid. See also Life and Work in British Central Africa, 1894 (No. 80), p.2.

79. R.H. Napier, giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO525/66, PRO, London, p.477.
80. B. Pachai. Op. Cit. p.19.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Life and Work in British Central Africa (No.65) July, 1893, pp. 3-4.
84. See Booth's Missionary Manifesto avoids discussing the issue of Baptism 'The Greatest Work in the World ...'.
85. Memorandum of Association of the Nyassa Industrial Mission - before it was amended by Special Resolution passed on the 15th day of June 1925 - deposited at The African Evangelical Fellowship Centre, Wimbledon.
86. G.A. Shepperson. Op. Cit. p. 234.
87. George Shepperson and Thomas Price. Op. Cit. p. 48. See Also: Joseph Booth and Charles Domingo [eds.] The African Sabbath Recorder, NO. 6. 1913, p.4. note: "This Chilembwe was Booth's very first convert baptized on July 17, 1893, midst fierce opposition and discouragement and almost threats from Blantyre Presbyterians".
88. Life and Work. Op. Cit. (No. 80), 1894, p.2. Note that the fundamental difference between the Church of Scotland and Baptist groups is that of immersion versus sprinkling and the fact that the Church of Scotland baptizes the infant children of believers.
89. Ibid, pp. 2-3.
90. Ibid.
91. Memorandum of Association of the Nyassa Industrial Mission ... Op. Cit.
92. Texts cited:  
 I Corinthians 10:1, 2 (KJV)  
 "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea".  
  
 I Peter 3:20, 21 (KJV)  
 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water; The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also

now save us (not putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ".

93. D.C. Haynes, The Baptist Denomination, (New York, 1856), p. 152.
94. *Ibid.*, 153.
95. *Ibid.*
96. *Ibid.*, p.154.
97. *Ibid.*
98. John C. Wenger [ed.] The Complete Writings of Menno Simons C.1496-1561 (Scottdale, 1956), p.246. See also Eldon T. Yoder and Monroe D. Hochstetter, *Op. Cit.* pp. 365-6.
99. Protestant Princes and States, "The Whole System of the XXI Doctrinal Articles of the Evangelical Confessors (London, 1530), p.14.
102. Life and Work. *Op. Cit.* (No. 80), 1894, p.2. See also A. Hetherwick giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO 525/66, PRO, London.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*
105. Life and Work. *Op. Cit.* (No. 76) 1894, p.1.
106. Life and Work. *Op. Cit.* (No. 70) 1893, p.2. See also (No. 76) 1894, p.2.
107. Life and Work. *Op. Cit.* (No. 80) 1894, p.2.
108. G.A. Shepperson. *Op. Cit.* p.234.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. A. Hetherwick, Giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO525/66, PRO, London. He stated, "We accept their baptism as valid but we demand a period of instruction". p. 264.
112. G.A. Shepperson, *Op.Cit.* p.234.
113. *Ibid.* See also George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Op. Cit.* p.33.
114. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, *Op. Cit.* p.48.

115. Life and Work Op. Cit. (No.80) 1894, p.3.
116. Life and Work Op.Cit. (No.65) 1893, p.3.
117. C.H. Spurgeon, Autobiography (London, 1899) pp. 355-6.
118. K.R. Manley, 'Ordination Among Australian Baptists' The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII (No.4), 1979, p.172.
119. David Calderwood [ed.] The First and Second Booke of Discipline (Leyden, 1621), pp. 29-30.
120. Ibid. p.75.
121. C.H. Spurgeon. Op. Cit. p.356.
122. Clinton Bennett, 'Baptists, Bishops and the Sacerdotal Ministry' The Baptist Quarterly (No.8) Vol.XXIX, 1982. p.375. See also Wolfgang Schaufele, 'The Missionary Vision and Activity of the Anabaptist Laity' The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 1962, (No.2) Vol.XXXVI, pp.99-115. Wilbert R. Shenk [ed.] Anabaptism and Mission Op. Cit. pp.70-87.
123. Life and Work. Op.Cit. (No.80) 1894, p.2.
124. Joseph Booth 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.573.
125. Ibid. p.574.
126. Harry W. Langworthy III, Op.Cit. p.27.
127. Johannes Van Den Berg, Constrained By Jesus' Love (Kampden, 1956), p.160.
128. Ibid.
129. Franklin H. Littel, The Anabaptist View of the Church. Op. Cit. p.77.
130. J.D. Graber. Op. Cit. p.155.
131. Eldon T. Yoder and Monroe D. Hochstetler, Op. Cit. p.139 and pp 146-148.
132. Oscar Cullmann, 'Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament' IN Gerald H. Anderson, The Theology of Christian Mission (London, 1961), pp.42-3.
133. Ibid., pp. 48 & 50.
134. David J. Bosch, Witness to the World (London, 1980), p.235.

135. Jacques Matthey, Op. Cit. p.172.
136. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World ...' Op. Cit. p.575.
137. Rolland Allen, Missionary Principles (London, 1913), p.59.
138. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.577.
139. Ibid.
140. Ibid., p. 579.
141. John Driver, 'Paul and Mission' IN Wilbert R. Shenk [ed.] Mission Focus Current Issues (Ontario, 1980), p.54.
142. Ibid.
143. F.D. Lugard, The Rise of Our East African Empire (Edinburgh, 1893), pp. 73-4.
144. Joseph Booth, 'The Greatest Work in the World...' Op. Cit. p.579.
145. John Driver, Op. Cit. p.61.
146. W. Robertson Nicoll [ed.] The Expositor's Greek Testament (London) vol. IV, p.52.
147. A. Hetherwick, Op. cit.

**CHAPTER IV****BOOTH AND THE SABBATH DOCTRINE**

This chapter intends to examine the doctrine of the Sabbath as it pertained to Booth's understanding of scripture and history. An attempt is also made to show the subsequent impact his sabbatarian ideas had on his African adherents and associates. The circumstances that led to his dramatic change from the observance of Sunday as a day of rest and worship to the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday) has already been highlighted in Chapter II. However, Langworthy says regarding Booth,

Although it is probably futile to think that motives for conversion and causes of beliefs can be completely understood, we cannot avoid trying to determine causes, or at least detailing the process of change, for Booth's beliefs. This is particularly important in regards to the sabbath, which was to be a consistent, vital and even obsessive theme for the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup>

This assessment of the importance of the Sabbath Doctrine to Booth is challenged by Boeder, who describes Booth as "basically a Baptist who enjoyed splitting hairs over the Sabbath issue".<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, whatever reasons impelled him to embrace what he called 'Fresh Truth', the change is so important and has such far reaching consequences, it must be investigated. So we will attempt to describe in this chapter the theological process by which Booth was led to adhere to the Seventh Day Sabbath. We intend also to ascertain the reason why he shifted from his fundamental Sabbatarian stance later in life.

In 1898, Booth expressed his views for the first time on the Sabbath question, through a tract entitled 'Why I Abandoned Sunday-keeping'. In his introduction, he

felt it was necessary to make his position clear to his colleagues in England, Scotland and Australia who had assisted him "during the founding of various Industrial Self-Supporting Missions in East Central Africa, since the year 1891". He added "a similar apology is also due to the friends in America who have aided in the formation of the African Baptist Industrial Mission: as to why I resolutely discard the day called Sunday as a substitute for the Sabbath-day God appointed and pronounced to be thenceforth blessed, holy, and sanctified".<sup>3</sup>

And furthermore he argued that "As a Protestant accepting the common Protestant axiom that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice",<sup>4</sup> it was therefore his purpose "to submit for consideration of other Protestants"<sup>5</sup> the process by which he had arrived at his conclusions.

### **BOOTH AND THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH OBSERVANCE**

The four main schools of thought concerning the origins of the Sabbath traced it back to (a) Creation (b) Wilderness of Sin (c) Sinai and (d) from after the Exile. However there is another hypothesis which scholars use, as Hasel points out: "Since 1883 there have been many attempts to find the origin of the Sabbath outside of Israel".<sup>6</sup> Andreasen also acknowledges a similar understanding when he writes: "The great interest in the Sabbath among Old Testament scholars during the first third of this century is sometimes attributed to Wilhelm Lotz, who in 1883 addressed the

question of the origin of the Sabbath by means of some newly discovered Babylonian texts."<sup>7</sup>

It is interesting, however, to note that Booth preferred to trace the origins of the Sabbath back to Creation. His view was that "It was instituted [the Sabbath] in Paradise prior to the fall". He used as his proof-text "Genesis 2:2, 3: God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it".<sup>8</sup> And based on this premise, he reached the conclusion "That the Bible knows of no other Sabbath-day, declared of God to be 'blessed', 'holy', and 'sanctified', but the seventh day".<sup>9</sup> What one discovers is the similarity of Booth's Seventh day Sabbath theology and that of some of the 16th century Anabaptist leaders such as Oswaldt Glaidt and Andreas Fischer.<sup>10</sup> Glaidt used Genesis 2 to show that the Sabbath was first instituted at Creation since he argued "God himself rested on the Seventh Day, Gen 2, 2".<sup>11</sup> Strand affirms that "Glait believed that the Sabbath had been commanded and kept from Creation, with God having commanded Adam in Paradise to celebrate the Sabbath".<sup>12</sup> A.H. Lewis (Booth's mentor) stresses the fact that it was God who "made the Sabbath sacred at Creation".<sup>13</sup> Using the same point of argument, Hasel asserts that "the origin of the Sabbath at Creation and the language for the motivation reminds us of the Creation account, especially Genesis 2:1-3".<sup>14</sup> However critics have objected to such interpretations, claiming that:

Genesis 2 does not mention the word 'Sabbath'. It speaks about the 'seventh day'. Unless the reader equates 'seventh day' and 'Sabbath' there is no reference to the Sabbath here. Genesis 2 does not speak about a religious cultic feast day or any institution at all. There is no direct command that the seventh day should be kept in any way.<sup>15</sup>

Andreasen seems to share this skeptical view and even goes so far to suggest that the Old Testament "does not remember when the Sabbath began and where it originated", <sup>16</sup> and therefore concludes "Perhaps we should take this to mean that the Sabbath is older than the Old Testament literature and that its origin was as obscure to it as it is for us".<sup>17</sup> But Lee observes that although "it is conceded that the seventh day of Creation is not specifically called the sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3, yet it should be pointed out that the Edenic sabbath is implicit in the Hebrew verb for 'rest'...".<sup>18</sup> Even more emphatic is Waterman's observation and conclusion when he writes: "It seems clear therefore, that the divine origin and institution of the sabbath took place at the beginning of human history. At that time God not only provided a divine example for keeping the seventh day as a day of rest, but also blessed and set apart the seventh day for the use and benefit of man".<sup>19</sup> It must be pointed out that Booth's claim to the effect that the Sabbath was instituted 'prior to the fall' of Adam is not without significance. This was a *sine qua non* that led him to argue that the Old Testament Sabbath was intended for the whole human race and not as was believed "for the Jews only".<sup>20</sup> He referred to Mark 2:27 in the New Testament to support his argument: "Jesus said the Sabbath was made 'for man' from the first man [Adam] to the last".<sup>21</sup> Beckwith and Stott cite Aristobulus who believed that "God who created the world gave the Sabbath to all men (not just to Israel) as a rest from the troubles of life".<sup>22</sup> A.H. Lewis, from whom Booth seems to have received much inspiration on this theme, wrote "In this Christ clearly indicates that the Sabbath law antedated the race and was given for the especial benefit of the race. Hence also his right, as 'Lord of the Sabbath'".<sup>23</sup> It is interesting that Gilfillan is even more explicit

when he writes: "The institution thus appointed at Creation was designed to be a law, right, or blessing to mankind in all time... It was addressed to the father of mankind and through him to all his posterity".<sup>24</sup> It may have been for this reason that Booth contended that the Sabbath institution "was operative before the Jewish period and prior to the law. Ex. 16:26".<sup>25</sup> Hasel certainly would have welcomed Booth's point. For he too writes: "Exodus 16 contains key notions regarding the origin, purpose, function and meaning of the Sabbath. It reveals that the Sabbath institution was known before the giving of the law on Mount Sinai and before its appearance in the Wilderness of Sin".<sup>26</sup> And hence some scholars conclude that "It seems better thereof to see Exod. 16 and 20 not as imposing a new ordinance but as reiterating a much older one (that of Gen. 2; to which Exod. 20, as we have seen refers)".<sup>27</sup> The great 20th century Jewish scholar, Martin Buber, also supports this view when he states that "The Sabbath is not introduced for the first time on Sinai, it is there already ... it is not introduced for the first time even in the wilderness of Sin, where manna is found. Here, too, it is proclaimed as something which is already in existence".<sup>28</sup> A classic Protestant view was expounded by Paley, who saw the experience of Israel in the Wilderness of Sin as pointing to the "first actual institution of the sabbath".<sup>29</sup> He goes even further in employing an argument most scholars have used as a rebuttal of the idea that the Sabbath originated from Creation which is that:

If the sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import, and observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years, it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion

to it, should occur either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, ... Nor is there, in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the sabbath, then appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended.<sup>30</sup>

The great modern Protestant scholar, Von Rad, however, takes the view that although the Sabbath was there from Creation, "The boldness of the statement at Gen. II.2 resides in the fact that the divine rest is not at this point made normative for the rhythm of human life, ... Nothing is said here of the Sabbath law and Israel learns of it only at Sinai".<sup>31</sup> Like Booth, the Seventh day Anabaptists, Glait in particular "rejected the argument that the Sabbath originated with Moses on Mt. Sinai by pointing out that the Sabbath 'was not first given through Moses, but was given orally at the beginning of the world and was celebrated and sanctified by Abraham'"<sup>32</sup>, But we note also that Booth did not limit himself to the scriptural passages found in the Pentateuch. To support his theological position on the Sabbath issue he went further to draw other references, such as those from the prophet Isaiah (ch.56:2,6,7) to show that the Sabbath was "for all the people"<sup>33</sup> from Creation. Note Andreasen's assessment of the passage mark "The prominence of the Sabbath suggests to most interpreters a post-exilic date, and a late one at that, partly because of the general assumption that the Sabbath became unique institution in post exilic times".<sup>34</sup>

Booth touched on another aspect worth noting related to the Sabbath and the Ten Commandments was that he believed "The moral law, as defined by the ten

commandments, is of a perpetual obligation".<sup>35</sup> He argued against the idea that the "Sabbaths are ended; all days should be as Sabbath days",<sup>36</sup> or that "One day in seven, any day will suffice".<sup>37</sup> Here Booth is challenging the standard Protestant view of his day, enunciated by Neander, the 19th century church historian who insisted that, "The laws of the Sabbath, like all the rest of the ceremonial laws of the Jews, could only arise again in Christianity, by being spiritualised and ennobled, inasmuch as every day was now to be sanctified by the dependence of the whole life on God through Christ, on every day".<sup>38</sup> He went on to add "Inasmuch as the Christian every day pursued the calling entrusted to him by God, with godly feelings, preserving his heart in purity from all inward contact with what is ungodly, and seeking constantly to keep holy the name of his Lord in thought, word and deed - every day was to be a true Sabbath to him".<sup>39</sup>

However, it is significant that Booth's method of interpretation, as pointed out earlier, followed the pattern of the Sabbatarian Anabaptists. Fischer, referring to Romans 3:31, argued that the text provided a clear proof "that faith in Christ does not abolish the law. On the contrary, through faith in Christ we uphold the law. This includes the Sabbath".<sup>40</sup> He also argued "that only the Priestly Law has been superceded by Christ and that the Council in Acts 15 as well as Heb.7 and elsewhere in the N.T. speak only of the Priestly Law".<sup>41</sup> In general most of the Seventh day Sabbatarian Anabaptists defended the idea that the "Moral Law remains in effect".<sup>42</sup> "In Liegnitz Glait engaged Schwensfeld in a debate on the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest still binding for Christians".<sup>43</sup> Hasel summarizes Glait's theology of the Sabbath in the following points:

(1) The Sabbath as one of the commandments of the Decalogue must still be kept by Christians. (2) The Sabbath is a memorial of creation and an eternal covenant. (3) The Sabbath was kept from the beginning of the world by Adam, Abraham, and the children of Israel, even before the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. (4) The Sabbath was not changed, annulled, or broken by Christ, but He Himself established, confirmed, and adorned it. (5) The Sabbath was observed by the Apostles and by Paul. (6) The Sabbath must be observed on the seventh day of the week which is Saturday. (7) The Sabbath is a sign of the eternal Sabbath and must be kept literally as long as the world stands, until we enter the eternal rest at the Parousia. (8) The keeping of the Sabbath is a necessity for the Christian who wants to enter the heavenly paradise. (9) Those who do not observe the literal Sabbath will be punished by God. (10) The pope invented Sunday.<sup>44</sup>

It must be emphasized, however, as pointed out already in Chapter II, that Booth studied intensively under A.H. Lewis, a Sabbatarian Church historian. Booth's views on the Sabbath question show a number of influences, but the dominant one is that of A.H. Lewis. Booth's dependence on Lewis is made clear when he argues that: "the solemn obligation to honor and obey the whole of the commandments, as far as in us lies, is therefore abundantly manifest".<sup>45</sup> He believed "That the Lord of the Sabbath, the apostles and the New Testament disciples kept, and left us the example to keep, holy the seventh day as the Sabbath".<sup>46</sup> This fits exactly with Lewis's teaching that "The Bible nowhere represents the Sabbath as a ceremonial institution. It has nothing in common with the festival days, which, as a part of the ceremonial code, pointed to Christ",<sup>47</sup> concluded that "the example of Christ and his disciples is in full harmony with their teachings. During Christ's life, while his disciples were with him, the Sabbath was always observed by him and them. In all his acts there is no hint that the law was to be annulled".<sup>48</sup> Booth selected the following scriptural passages to support first the idea that Jesus and his followers kept

the Seventh day Sabbath. (1) Jesus as his tradition was went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Mark 1:21, Luke 4:16)<sup>49</sup> (2) The women from Galilee prepared spices for his annointment and then rested on the Sabbath day according to the law (Luke 23:55-56).<sup>50</sup> (3) The prophecy of Jesus Christ regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the instruction to his disciples that their flight not be on the Sabbath (Matt. 24:20).<sup>51</sup> Recent works from scholars such as Jewett seem to agree with Booth's trend of thought. He writes, "there can be little doubt, then, that Jesus, as a devout Jew, observed the Sabbath. To feature Him as the grand innovator, who swept it aside in the name of liberty, is to remake Jesus in the image of the Enlightenment".<sup>52</sup> He also argues that "Jesus did not reject the institution of the Sabbath as such, but only the tradition of the elders regarding sabbathkeeping".<sup>53</sup> It is important to show that Booth's assertion is reflected in Lewis' summary on the exemplary life of Jesus and his disciples concerning Sabbath observance Lewis writes "During the life of Christ the Sabbath was always observed by him, and by his followers. He corrected the errors and false notions which were held concerning it, but gave no hint that it was to be abrogated".<sup>54</sup> And as regards the apostles, he comments:

The book of Acts gives a connected history of the recognition and observance of the Sabbath by the apostles while they were organizing many of the churches spoken of in the New Testament.

In all the history of the doings and teachings of the apostles, there is not the remotest reference to the abrogation of the Sabbath."<sup>55</sup>

There can be no doubt that these and other references are also the arguments and conclusions Booth reached on the question of the Sabbath as a perpetual obligation.

Hence then his statement: "Thus we perceive that both the Old Testament and the New, whether before or after resurrection, require the seventh day to be observed as defined by the fourth commandment".<sup>56</sup> This was also the teaching of Fischer, a Seventh-day Sabbatarian Anabaptist. He drew "parallels between the OT Patriarchs and the NT apostles. Their common ground is the Decalogue; including the Sabbath".<sup>57</sup> This point he strongly reiterated that "Moses and the OT prophets, as well as the NT apostles, all teach that we are to hold the Ten Commandments. This includes the Sabbath by implication"<sup>58</sup> and also that both the "Old and NT speak with one voice in regard to the Decalogue, that it should be kept, Sabbath included".<sup>59</sup> Booth also expressed similar Anabaptist sentiments and went even further to consider as 'fallacy' the arguments "that 'love, the fulfilment of the law' cancels the obligation to observe and honor the 4th commandment" and that "the Abrahamic covenant frees all gentiles from obligation to observe the Sabbath Law".<sup>60</sup>

However, there are other scholars such as Glazebrook who believe "only three times in the NT is there any reference to a religious observance of Sunday".<sup>61</sup> He refers to the fact that "St. Paul urged his converts at Corinth to put aside money for charity every Sunday (I Co.16.2). Shortly after writing this he preached at a service held at Troas, which is mentioned as if it were a regular institution (Ac.20.7). Thirty years later, perhaps, the author of the Apocalypse wrote 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day' (Rev.1.10)".<sup>62</sup> Then in his conclusion, he writes "Though not quite conclusive, the evidence makes it probable that the observance of Sunday began

among St. Paul's churches, which were predominantly Gentile".<sup>63</sup> These points are also acknowledged by Beckwith and Stott who point out that "In the first place, the New Testament mentions that Lord's Day only outside Palestine, in Acts 20:7; I Corinth 16:2, and Rev. 1:10; yet in the first of these instances we find it being observed in the presence of Paul, who was not a Gentile but a Jew".<sup>64</sup> Jewett seems also to welcome the use of these scriptural references as a basis for Sunday worship. He states that "In seeking to reconstruct the history of the first-day worship, most scholars begin with the New Testament passages which refer to the first day. There are three such passages. In I Corinthians 16:2 Paul instructs the Corinthians to lay aside for the collection he will make on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 refers to a Christian gathering on the first day of the week to break bread. An in Revelation 1:10 John says he was in the Spirit on the 'Lord's Day'"<sup>65</sup> Frieling in his book "From Sabbath to Sunday" prefers to include other passages from the Gospels along with those already cited above. He writes:

In the New Testament at first the Jewish nomenclature of the 'first day after the sabbath' is retained. We find this 'first day' in the Easter chapters of all four evangelists (Matt.28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1,19), and Paul also uses this form. In the First Letter to the Corinthians 'the first day of every week' (16:2) is implied as the usual day for the assembly of the Christian congregations. That would be about year 54. The Acts of the Apostles tells how the congregation of Troas were gathered together with Paul by night on the first day after the Sabbath, which of course ended at six o'clock on Saturday evening; and the rite of the 'breaking of bread' was celebrated early on Sunday morning before the first rays of the rising sun (20:7-11). At the end of the New Testament however, in the Revelation to John, a new name with greater content is introduced. John, now an old man on Patmos, beholds the all-powerful sunfilled appearance of the Risen One on the 'Lord's Day' (1:10).<sup>66</sup>

Booth seems to have considered the above scriptural passages, especially the Pauline texts and reached the following conclusion. He argued:

In none of these, or the resurrection appearances of the Lord, or the 'laying by in store' on the first day of the week is there furnished the slightest possible hint of any abrogation of the Sabbath of the commandment, or change in their observance of it, or reverence toward it; on the contrary, whatever extra week-day meetings they held, they never failed to keep the seventh day holy unto God.<sup>67</sup>

In reference to I Corinthians 16:2, the modern scholar Bacchiocchi concludes, "The text therefore proposes a valuable weekly plan to ensure a substantial and orderly contribution on behalf of the poor brethren of Jerusalem, but to extract more meaning from the text would distort it."<sup>68</sup> This reflects the 19th Century Protestant view of Neander, who also was skeptical: "The passage from I Cor. xvi.2 is still less convincing, for all may be quite competently explained, if we only consider the passage as referring to the beginning of the civil week".<sup>69</sup> A.H. Lewis writes: "The text contains no suggestion of a public gathering, but the exact opposite".<sup>70</sup> And further attempts to explain the circumstance by which Paul made the statement:

The direction given by Paul is that each man should begin the work of the week by putting aside as much as he was able for the poor saints at Jerusalem, in order that each having thus decided what he could do, there need be no delay about the matter when Paul should arrive. This order was only temporary, and for a specific purpose. More than this, it was only five years before that Paul organized the Corinthian church while he was observing the Sabbath. Thus does this passage prove too weak to support even an inference in favor of a change of the Sabbath.<sup>71</sup>

It is interesting to note also that Booth's view was that "meetings for Christian intercourse, prayer, the breaking of bread or baptism appear to have been held on

any day of the week as might be convenient"<sup>72</sup>, then added "but these did not in any way supersede or interfere with the regular worship on God's holy day".<sup>73</sup> He cited Acts 2:46 and 47 to support his view. And in reference to Acts 20:7, he wrote "Again, at Troas, 'upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow;'"<sup>74</sup> which Booth in his opinion interpreted as "evidently a special and farewell meeting"<sup>75</sup>, as opposed to a regular church gathering. Booth's interpretation is supported by Neander: "The passage is not entirely convincing, because the impending departure of the apostle may have united the little Church in a brotherly parting meal, on occasion of which the apostle delivered his last address, although there was no particular celebration of a Sunday in the case".<sup>76</sup> As regards Revelation 1:10, Booth stated, "The apostle John, who so emphatically repeats the importance of Keeping the Commandments, uses, for the first time, the expression, 'the Lord's day', but if he was not referring to the future 'day of the Lord'", he argued, "then it must have been the day over which Jesus asserted His Lordship, that is, the Sabbath day".<sup>77</sup> Fischer the Anabaptist leader, "did not allow the day of the Lord in Rev.1:10 to refer to Sunday".<sup>78</sup> It is not the purpose of this chapter to go into details on this theme but suffice it to say that, Booth clearly would have had the support of Bacchiocchi in his view of the Sabbath and this view contradicts the tradition represented by Frieling and other scholars. In this section, we have noted how Booth defended the Seventh day Sabbath from a Biblical perspective after his conversion to it. We now discuss what Booth apparently considered to be the time, place and causes of the origin of Christian Sunday observance.

**BEHIND THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
SUNDAY OBSERVANCE IN BOOTH'S THOUGHT**

The question regarding the rise of Sunday-keeping in early Christianity was, according to Booth, first brought about because of "prejudice against the Jews",<sup>79</sup> and he goes on to remark that this "was a leaven early used to alienate the primitive church from the true Sabbath".<sup>80</sup> This view was reiterated in a separate statement in which he noted: "Thus we see Sunday came ... from deepseated prejudice against the Jews".<sup>81</sup> To support his point, Booth then referred to a church historian, whom he cited: "Dr Neander says: "Opposition to Judaism introduced ... Sunday very early".<sup>82</sup> It is significant to note that Neander went even further in highlighting the anti-Jewish feeling by stating that "allusion is also made to the festival of Sunday, as a symbol of a new life, consecrated to the Lord, in opposition to the old Sabbath in the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians".<sup>83</sup> This epistle, believed to have been written by Ignatius who died before 117 A.D., has been widely accepted by some scholars as an "authority for the observance of Sunday in the first century of the Christian era".<sup>84</sup> The original letter to the Magnesians read as follows:

If therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death.<sup>85</sup>

It is not the purpose of this chapter to study Ignatius' epistle in detail, but suffice it to say that over many centuries scholars have interpreted it in various ways.<sup>86</sup> However, Neander's comment gave the explanation:

Sunday was distinguished as a day of joy by the circumstances, that men did not fast upon it, and that they prayed standing up and not kneeling, as Christ had raised up fallen man to heaven again through his resurrection. The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine command in this respect, far from them and from the early apostolic Church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place, for men appear by that time to have considered labouring on Sunday as sin.<sup>87</sup>

As a consequence, "The Churches which were a graft of a Christian on a Jewish spirit, although they received the festival of Sunday, retained also that of the Sabbath".<sup>88</sup> But it was noticed that "in the Western Churches, particularly the Roman, where opposition to Judaism was the prevailing tendency, this very opposition produced the custom of celebrating the Saturday in particular as a fast day. This difference in customs would of course be striking, where members of the Oriental Church spent their Sabbath-day in the Western Church".<sup>89</sup> The latter point is discussed by Bingham in his work Antiquities of the Church where he refers to a correspondence from St. Augustine to St. Jerome. "For writing to St. Jerome, he asks him, Whether he thought an Oriental Christian, when he came to Rome, might not without any Dissimulation fast on every Sabbath as well as that one Sabbath called the paschal Vigil?"<sup>90</sup> Clearly the problem that was encountered amounted to the fact that:

If we say it is a Sin (to fast on the Sabbath), we shall condemn not only the Roman Church, but many neighbouring Churches, and some at a greater distance, where that custom is kept and retained. But if we think it is a Sin not to fast on the Sabbath, we shall rashly condemn all the Oriental Churches, and the greatest Part of the Christian World. We should therefore rather say, it is a Thing indifferent in itself, which a good Man may perform either way without Dissimulation, complying with the society and Observation of the Church where he happens to

be. From hence it is plain, that all the Oriental Churches, and the greatest Part of the World observed the Sabbath as a Festival.<sup>91</sup>

This indicates among other things that the Seventh day Sabbath was not abandoned all at once; scholars indicate it was a gradual process. Kenneth Strand makes the observation that "It has become obvious that the displacement of Saturday by Sunday as a day of weekly Christian worship and rest was a long and slow process".<sup>92</sup> And continues to argue, "Until the second century there is no concrete evidence of a Christian weekly Sunday celebration anywhere. The first specific references during that century come from Alexandria and Rome, places that also early rejected observance of the seventh-day Sabbath".<sup>93</sup> This point is also made by a fifth century church historian Scholasticus Socrates, who affirms, "For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this".<sup>94</sup> It is echoed by Sozomen, who states, "The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria".<sup>95</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that Booth distinguishes between Alexandria and Rome. However, Booth pointed out that Alexandria and its bishop had adhered to the Seventh day Sabbath in the Western Church. He cited "Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in the fourth century, who wrote: 'We assemble on Saturday, not that we are infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath'".<sup>96</sup> This observation is repeated by Bingham, who writes: "Athanasius likewise tells us that they held Religious

Assemblies on the Sabbath, not because they were infected with Judaism, but to worship Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath".<sup>97</sup> Athanasius' statement may have provided Booth with an argument to contrast Alexandria and Rome. He went on to link the adoption of Sunday observance with Rome's anti-Jewish stance, stating that "Constantine, in an epistle to the Churches, urges: 'We have learned another way from our Saviour which we may follow ... Wherefore, let us have nothing in common with that most odious brood of the Jews'.<sup>98</sup> And it may have been primarily for this reason that Booth suggests that Constantine had "also made a law (A.D.321) that on the ... day which the Hebrews call the first day of the week, the Greeks the day of the sun ... all should worship God with prayer and supplication."<sup>99</sup> And hence "This First Sunday Edict ran thus: 'Let all judges and city people and all tradesmen rest upon the Venerable Day of the Sun. But let those dwelling in the country freely and with full liberty attend to culture of their fields'.<sup>100</sup> In his opinion Booth concluded "This edict thus formed a favourable standing-ground for the many sun-worshippers on the one hand, and the anti-Jewish Christian element on the other, and so paved the way for the spurious Sunday-Sabbath of a later date".<sup>101</sup> He also noted "from unceasing Sunday Laws since A.D.321",<sup>102</sup> a pattern was seemingly set which eventually saw the establishment of the first day of the week as a day of rest and worship. Booth specifically cited "The Council of Laodicea (about A.D.350) passed the following decree: It is not proper for Christians to Judaize and to cease to labour on the Sabbath [Saturday], but they ought to work that day and put especial honor upon the Lord's Day, as Christians. If any be found Judaizing, let him be anathematized".<sup>103</sup>

Booth seems to have emphasized that at the Laodicean Council "The Romish Church from the fourth century steadily exalted the Sunday and discountenanced the true Sabbath, as numerous edicts abundantly demonstrate. Rome, therefore, not the Bible, is the author of the Sunday substitute for God's holy Sabbath-day".<sup>104</sup> It is clear also that the Anabaptist Oswaldt Glaidt took a similar stance when he argued that "The Day of the Lord (Rev.1) was not a Sunday. Sunday worship was introduced by the Popes".<sup>105</sup> Fischer, another Anabaptist, does not only repeat Glaidt's view, but goes even further to argue that "it was Pope Victor I (d.198) who first instituted Sunday worship".<sup>106</sup> But Leichty claims that "Historically this is not as clear as Fischer makes it out to be. Victor I did argue that Easter was a Sunday." He probably meant to imply that it was Victor's insistence on a Sunday worship that led to the Council of Nicea (325) endorsing the Sunday Easter and Sunday worship. It was in conjunction with this Council that Constantine issued the statement that 'the day of rest should be the venerable day of the Sun'.<sup>107</sup> Under the influence of A.H. Lewis, Booth continued to take a strong fundamental position regarding the change from Sabbath to Sunday. He used Cardinal Gibbons' statement as a justification against Sunday observance. Gibbons wrote:

The Catholic church for even one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday. The Protestant world at its birth found the Christian Sabbath too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence. It was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the church's right to change the day for over three hundred years. The Christian Sabbath is, therefore, to this day of acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.<sup>108</sup>

In his monumental work 'The Faith of Our Fathers', Gibbons seems to confirm the above statement by pointing out that

you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify ... We must, therefore, conclude that the Scriptures alone cannot be a sufficient guide and rule of faith, because they cannot at any time be within the reach of every inquirer, because they are not of themselves clear and intelligible even in matters of the highest importance, and because they do not contain all the truths necessary for salvation.<sup>109</sup>

Booth was so deeply convinced of his position that he could use the Roman Catholic argument against mainstream Protestantism. He is clear that the Bible contains no evidence for giving up the Sabbath and that it was a matter of human tradition.

#### **THE EARLY CELTIC CHURCH AND THE SEVENTH DAY SABBATH QUESTION**

Joseph Booth expressed keen interest on the question of the Sabbath in the early Celtic Churches of Scotland. "Scotland was not conquered by the Romans, and so", Booth argued, using A.H. Lewis' citation from Moffat's book The Church in Scotland, "it seems to have been customary in the Celtic Churches of early times, in Ireland as well as in Scotland, to keep Saturday the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week".<sup>110</sup> Indeed Moffat goes so far even to suggest that "the day on which the Lord lay in the grave - and did not understand the precept about resting from labor to apply to the day of rejoicing over his resurrection".<sup>111</sup>

It would seem that Booth's preoccupation with this theme was mainly aimed

at strengthening Domingo's Seventh day Sabbatarian movement in Northern Nyasaland.<sup>112</sup> One cannot rule out the fact that his strategy was to reach other groups such as Kamwana's Watchtower adherents and also the Free Church of Scotland Christians, the latter being the quasi-established church in the area. But suffice it to say that it may have been on the premise that the early Celtic Church was Sabbatarian that Booth and other writers argue that hence "Queen Margaret's (Roman Catholic) next point of complaint against them (Celtic preachers and Clergy) was that they did not reverence 'the Lord's day' but they hold Saturday to be the Sabbath".<sup>113</sup> However, "it was not long before Margaret directed her attention to the state of the Scottish Church, and to the work of bringing about "what she considered as "a reform of certain abuses connected with it".<sup>114</sup> She claimed to have found in the Celtic Church traditions that were seen as being "at variance with the practice of the universal church and which, as it appeared to her, had no just claim to longer toleration".<sup>115</sup> It may be that among what she termed as "barbarous rites"<sup>116</sup> kept by the majority of people in some parts of Scotland included the Seventh Day observance. Queen Margaret seems to have urged the Celtic leaders to reverence the Lord's day "on account of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead on that day",<sup>117</sup> her argument being that it was Pope Gregory who laid down the command to "cease from earthly labour on the Lord's day".<sup>118</sup> Margaret's insistence on behalf of Rome to acknowledge Sunday Observance may also have led Skene to agree with Moffat's observation that "They [Celtic Christians] seem to have followed a custom of which we find traces in the early Monastic Church of Ireland, by which they held Saturday to be the Sabbath on which they rested from their

labours, and on Sunday, on Lord's day, they celebrated the resurrection by the service in the church".<sup>119</sup> Bellesheim takes the same view that "the Scots in this manner had no doubt kept up the traditional practice of the ancient monastic Church of Ireland, which observed Saturday rather than Sunday as the day of rest".<sup>120</sup> It is to be noted that most scholars base their arguments regarding the Scottish and Irish early Celtic churches keeping Saturday as the Sabbath day also on St. Columba's experience, especially the statement he made just before his death. He is believed to have said the following to his close servant, Diormit.<sup>121</sup> Adamnan writes:

After the attendant had completed that promise on bended knees, according to the saint's desire, the venerable man made a statement to this effect: 'This day is called in the sacred books 'Sabbath', which is interpreted 'rest'. And truly this day is for me a Sabbath, because it is my last day of this present laborious life. In it after my toilsome labours I keep Sabbath; and at midnight of this following venerated Lord's-day, in the language of the Scriptures I shall go the way of the fathers. For now my Lord Jesus Christ deigns to invite me. To him I shall depart, I say, when he invites me, in the middle of this night. For so it has been revealed to me by the Lord himself'.<sup>122</sup>

MacEwen, based partly on St Columba's statement, seems also to confirm that the life of the Celtic Christian community "was primarily religious ... while Saturday was a day of rest (dies sabbati). To the Lord's Day no sabbatical ideas were attached".<sup>123</sup> This notion is again echoed by Bellesheim, who writes "The Celtic Church, as has already been pointed out, while observing the Lord's Day as a religious solemnity, appears to have followed the Jews in resting from labour on the Saturday".<sup>124</sup> During the period St Margaret pressed for reforms, Moffat observes that "The Queen insisted upon the single and strict observance of the Lord's Day. People and clergy alike submitted, but without entirely giving up their reverence for

Saturday", but then added "subsequently sank into a half-holy day preparatory for Sunday".<sup>125</sup> Andrew Lang nonetheless reaches the conclusion that "with Margaret came the beginning of the end of Monastic Celtic Church of Scotland".<sup>126</sup> But one sees that the argument that the early Celtic Christians embraced the Seventh day Sabbath, as Booth and other writers have suggested, has vigorously been refuted and has also come under criticism. Donald Maclean in his book The Law of the Lord's Day in the Celtic Church assesses MacEwen, Bellesheim and Skene's statements:

The late Professor MacEwen, in his History, vol.ii, p.53, writes: 'To the Lord's day no sabbatical ideas were attached'. This is merely accepting without discussion the statement of Bellesheim (History of the Catholic Church of Scotland...), who follows Skene in stating without any valid documentary authority that Saturday was observed as the Sabbath and not the Lord's day. Adamnan's reference to St. Columba's saying, 'This day (Saturday) in the Holy Scriptures is called the Sabbath, which means rest, and it is indeed Sabbath to me, for it is the last day of my present laborious life, and in it I rest after the fatigue of my labours,' is surely misunderstood by Skene and Bellesheim when they deduce an argument from it that Saturday was observed as a 'Sabbath'. The meaning seems clear. St. Columba names Saturday 'Sabbath', as was the custom, and says truly that the word means 'rest', but that does not imply that it was the weekly 'rest' ... If Saturday were the 'rest day', it surely would have been given as the exemplar and not the Lord's day".<sup>127</sup>

Maclean's skeptical view seems to be shared by Keough, an SDA church historian, who writes:

Columba says that the last Saturday of his life was indeed a Sabbath to him, and on it he (literally) 'sabbatized' after the fatigues of his labours. From this expression Skene, Bellesheim, and others following then, have gathered that Columba, and by inference, the Celtic Church observed the seventh day of the week as a sabbath ...

What may definitely be inferred from the passage is that Columba knew that the seventh day of the week was the Sabbath according to

the Scripture; that Sabbath meant rest; that the last Saturday of his life was indeed a Sabbath to him because he had come to the end of his laborious life; that the next day was a solemn day, being the Lord's day; and that at midnight he expected to go the way of his fathers. He did not say that he observed the Sabbath as a weekly rest from labour. He did not say that Saturday was a Sabbath to his attendant Diormit. The passage suggests that he is making a play on words, drawing a parallel between the Sabbath rest and the rest he was about to enjoy after a life of labour."<sup>128</sup>

But we also see that unlike Maclean and Keough's explanations, scholars such as Hardinge have insisted that "Adamnan made several references to the Sabbath in his life of Columba ... Adamnan invariably employed the original biblical name, Sabbath, for the seventh day of the week, and spoke of it in a manner betokening a respect which is not detected in writers two centuries later".<sup>129</sup> And in reference to Columba's statement he states: "From this and other passages it is true that Columba had some regard also for the first day of the week. But a sabbatical Sunday had not yet been accepted in Iona at the time when Adamnan wrote".<sup>130</sup> And David Marshall in his article 'Iona - The Birthplace of Christianity in Britain' mentions, "In Columba's Scotland the seventh-day Sabbath proved particularly difficult to eradicate" but then continues by stating that "Nevertheless on the eve of the Reformation, many communities in the Highlands and Islands continued to keep the seventh day holy".<sup>131</sup> What is even more intriguing is Hardinge's observation that "the earliest record of Celtic Christian settlers who were stigmatized as Judaizing" were believed to have been Africans, a revelation Hardinge notes as "most baffling".<sup>132</sup> This point is affirmed by Allan Anderson:

And the Papae have been named from their white robes, which they wore like priests; whence priests are all called papae in the Teutonic

tongue. An Island is still called, after them Papey. But as is observed from their habit and their writings of their books abandoned there, they were Africans, adhering to Judaism.<sup>133</sup>

It is not clear whether Booth knew of the connection between the early Celtic Church and the African Influence. If he did, most of his writings do not show the slightest hint. However, he seems to have seized upon Skene and Moffat's statements, made available to him by A.H. Lewis, to advance his Seventh day Sabbatarian views. And hence his insistence that "the Dominical Day (Sunday) was passed upon the Scotch people in A.D. 1203"<sup>134</sup> and went on to show how "in 1203 William, King of Scotland, called a Council of the principal of his kingdom, by which it was decreed that from twelve at noon on Saturday until Monday, should be Holy and that no profane work should be done".<sup>135</sup>

In the summer of 1913, Booth visited Britain<sup>136</sup> during which he claims to have verified the notion that the Celtic Evangelists from the Island of Iona both kept and promulgated the Seventh Day Sabbath. He specifically cited Dunfermline in Scotland and York in England as two towns where historical facts in his opinion were still very much in evidence. Booth wrote:

In Dunfermline, Scotland ... the case for sabbath restoration is stronger there than anywhere in Britain, since the History in the Carnegie library in that town is replete with proof that the last bold stand for the Sabbath and primitive Christianity, in all Europe, was made there by the Celtic sabbath keepers, as against the priests brought from Canterbury, by the sons of Queen Margaret, the first Roman Catholic queen of Scotland.<sup>137</sup>

And in the same report, Booth gave the following account concerning his trip to the

North of England:

At the City of York, I found from the local history in the Public library, that on the very site where the magnificent York Minster now stands, there was built in the 7th century, a wooden Oak Church, by Oswald the king of Northumbria (the country North of the river Humber) of which there once, on which York stands is a tributary, where the 7th Day sabbath worship was regularly conducted by the Evangelists brought from Iona; the converts of Columba after his exilement from Ireland.<sup>138</sup>

In the letter he wrote at the time, Booth was clearly very excited by the idea that Celtic Christianity in Scotland and the North of England had been Sabbatarian.<sup>139</sup>

#### BOOTH AND RUSSELL DEBATE THE SABBATH ISSUE

We noted in Chapter III that between 1906 and 1910 Booth affiliated with Charles T. Russell and his American-based Watch Tower Movement. And during this period Booth seems to have retained his Seventh Day Sabbath stance, but not without some compromises, a point to which we shall revert to later.

Just how deeply he now felt about the issue of the Sabbath can be seen from his extraordinary visit to the U.S. early in 1910. He went specifically to confront Charles Russell in an attempt to persuade the Watch Tower Leader to abandon

Sunday observance and to substitute the Seventh Day worship within his set of doctrines. Russell rejected the idea and subsequently terminated Booth's financial aid on grounds Langworthy noted as "Booth's fundamental insistence on the seventh day worship".<sup>140</sup>

On the tenth of May, 1910, Booth published a thirty-two page treatise entitled 'The Sabbath, its Relation to the "Royal Priesthood"'. The document seems to have been intended as a rebuttal of Russell's theology of the Sabbath in his works such as 'Tabernacle Shadows for the Royal Priesthood' and Volume 4 of his 'Bible Studies', which Booth claimed to have studied in great detail. Booth's booklet begins by applauding the Watchtower leader "with a sense of profound admiration and gratitude for the most glorious exposition of the 'glad tidings of great joy for all people' the world has yet seen".<sup>141</sup> There is no doubt that Russell's millennial views were attractive to Booth, as is seen from this comment. But at the same time he was critical of Russell, whom he felt "produced an intense concern, if not horror ... that the author [Russell] together with the whole body of co-believers resting with implicit faith in his guidance",<sup>142</sup> and had failed to take the Seventh day Sabbath issue seriously into consideration. Booth further noted:

The amazing perplexity to the writer's [Booth] mind and heart is that so much light upon, and insight into the deep things of God, can co-exist with the attitude assumed toward the divinely instituted Sabbath day, whereby the exceeding great risk, or certainly, of losing the prize so greatly desired and magnified is incurred. Indeed the perusal and examination of some of the positions taken seem so self-condemnatory

- some of which will be hereinafter quoted - that they produce in the writer a spiritual shock or shudder, bringing swiftly to mind the divine warning: By thy words shalt thou be justified and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.<sup>143</sup>

The initial argument between these two leaders started when Russell wrote to Booth in response to his insistence for him to adopt the Seventh Day Sabbath observance. On 20 January 1910 he wrote: "I would object to pressing the Sabbath day, as I do not consider it part of the doctrine of Christ. Neither Jesus nor the apostles preached it and where they are silent we can afford to be silent surely".<sup>144</sup> Booth seemed puzzled by the reply and therefore argued, "To assert that 'the Lord was silent to Sabbath observance', is certainly not sustained by the evidence of the Gospels".<sup>145</sup> He acknowledged "It is indisputable that during our Lord's lifetime questions as to the change of the Sabbath, substitution of another day, etc. had not arisen, nor had civil laws as to Sunday been thought of; hence there was no need to refute false teaching not yet in evidence".<sup>146</sup> He insisted, however, "The danger and sin, either at that or any subsequent time, of setting aside any of the commands of God, was pointed out by the Saviour".<sup>147</sup> He took more or less a similar view when he commented on the apostles, "To assert, as Pastor Russell does, 'that the apostles were silent regarding the sabbath' and that we 'may surely be silent also' seems to be a misleading kind of reasoning fraught with subtle danger to the 'royal priesthood', who need rather to be urged to make their calling and election sure, not by silently ignoring but loving obedience to the Sabbath, and every other law, in the spirit of Jesus, as a delight"<sup>148</sup> He cited Paul, James, John, Peter and Barnabas as the epitome of his argument, pointing out that they "were Sabbath keepers to the end of their lives".<sup>149</sup>

Booth then turned to another aspect of Russell's theology - the role of the law in scriptures, especially the Old Testament. The Watch Tower leader held the notion that the Ten Commandments had been abolished, including the sabbath. He taught that believers in Christ were no longer required to observe them because they were now under grace and not the old dispensation. The proof text he seems to have used to support his view was Col. 2:16, which read "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ".<sup>150</sup> Booth's response to the above argument was twofold. He first reinforced the existence of the OT law and the Sabbath and secondly dismissed the idea that the New Testament 'law of love' had replaced the old Sabbath. In his opinion the OT provided the premise that "The evidence proving that Abraham both knew and kept the unwritten law which God fully recognized and approved for him and his progeny is furnished in Gen.xxvi.5",<sup>151</sup> further stating:

...and that the Sabbath law was one of those is demonstrated as heretofore shown by the acts of Abraham's descendants, when ex-slaves, immediately after their emancipation and months prior to the divine re-writing of the laws of God, the previously kept ignorant by overwork and heavy oppression [in Egypt]. Hence it is manifest to the unbiased and open mind that the Sabbath law is one of the commands known to and kept by Abraham and written originally in perfect nature of his forefather - the perfect man Adam.<sup>152</sup>

The meaning of Booth's last statement referring to Adam as 'perfect man' is not clear, but judging by his former views on the same theme, we can only conclude that he sees Adam as a progenitor to whom the Sabbath was entrusted "prior to the fall".<sup>153</sup> His scathing remarks on Russell that followed are indicative of his extreme

fundamentalist ideas on the doctrine of the Sabbath. He wrote:

The popular 'strange fire' of Sunday substitution, borrowing deceptive lustre from the resurrection day; the 'strange fire' of no-lawism, of grace so abundant that we may continue to glory in the sin of Sabbath evasion, of Lord's day exaltation, also the modern, engaging, and highly entertaining, but fallacious, presentation by highly esteemed Pastor Russell, seeking to show that we, being under the faith covenant, or Abrahamic covenant, faith being counted for righteousness, we that is to say, the Gentiles, are not and never were, under any written law, other than our Lord's 'law of love' and therefore urged to stand fast in the 'law of liberty'. All which is very engaging if it clearly stated the whole truth nothing but the truth; but it certainly does not..<sup>154</sup>

He gave an explanation of what in his view 'under grace' entailed: "The law of love requires that we shall delight to search and meditate in the Godward commands including God's 'Remember the Sabbath day'. Love with all the 'mind and strength' forbids forgetfulness or resourceful evasiveness. The law of liberty is not license to sin by transgression of the law of God".<sup>155</sup> And hence he concluded: "No, the liberty wherewith Christ set us free is the liberty from past condemnation, and from ceremonial ordinances and types which led up to and terminated with the temple ritual; not the law rewritten upon the tables of stone".<sup>156</sup> It is worth noting that Booth accepted Russell's view that the ceremonial ordinances had been annulled but not the moral law. He seems to have distinguished the two, the former represented by types was the "shadow of things to come" while the latter applied perpetually to both Jews and Gentiles. We see once again that Booth followed the hermeneutic interpretation held by the Sabbatarian Anabaptists that drew a distinction between the two laws. Liechty points out that "Oswald argues that the Greek words 'en meri eortis' in Col. 2,16 exclude from Paul's judgement the biblical Sabbath ... The Law

says 'Do Not Murder'. But no-one would argue that this is no longer in effect. Nor would anyone argue that simply to refrain from murder is an attempt at works of righteousness".<sup>157</sup> This view is reiterated by Fischer.<sup>158</sup> And to counteract any notions that suggested that any Sabbath-keeping inclinations would eventually lead to legalism, Fischer suggested that "The Sabbath therefore, should be kept out of love for God's commandments. The motivation is love, not servitude. The Spirit of Christ works in the believer all good works, and they therefore will not forget the Sabbath, to keep it holy".<sup>159</sup> Glaidt strongly believed "It is wrong to think that Jesus denigrated or abolished the Sabbath by performing miracles on that day. On the contrary, the miracles he performed on that day were healings, which honor and glorify the Sabbath".<sup>160</sup>

But in spite of these statements, it is not clear how both Glaidt and Fischer argued their point using Col.2:16 and the same applies to Booth, who seems to accept Russell's analogy but with a Sabbatarian emphasis. He writes: "The Sabbath as a type is exceptional, since it was instituted at the close of creation and was ordained then for mankind in commemoration of God's resting from his creative work".<sup>161</sup> However, other commentators argue that "the context of Col., however, the command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath is not based on the Torah according to which Israel received the sabbath as a sign of her election from among the nations".<sup>162</sup>

However, some scholars, including Russell, have insisted on taking the opposite view that the Sabbath was abolished, conceiving it in Millennial terms.<sup>163</sup> Booth countered this, insisting that "Pastor Russell invites us to believe that this [The Sabbath in Col.2:16] refers solely to the seventh epoch of time during which God surrendered the dominion of earth to mankind".<sup>164</sup> He further counteracted such a millennial interpretation of the Sabbath arguing that "the Fourth Commandment, wherein it is declared that while 'the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,' it is also made perfectly clear that the solar Sabbath of equal duration with the six working days, was at creation, and as a memorial thereof bestowed upon the perfect man Adam and his progeny."<sup>165</sup> He reiterated that the Sabbath command "dated from creation, and so furnishes its own answer to modern ingenious teachers who would have us believe that Sabbath law was given to the Jew only, and is obligatory upon no other people ... whereas its closing words proclaim it to be a seal and memorial of God's rest from his creative work".<sup>166</sup> It is important to note, however, that in spite of Booth's interpretation and meaning of the Seventh Day Sabbath, he nonetheless seems to have given Russell's intricate millennial calculations<sup>167</sup> concerning the Sabbath a significant but cautious welcome. He commented: "To all of this connected, far-reaching plan of God, the seventh day, the Sabbath, is the key, and so far as each Christian unit is concerned, an indispensable link to the attainment of the final and highest blessing in God's benevolent plan; viz. 'the prize of the high calling of God'".<sup>168</sup> To a certain extent one does seem to detect millennial tendencies in Booth's choice of words and statements<sup>169</sup> which he may have adopted during his association with Charles Russell and his Watch Tower movement.

**THE INTRODUCTION AND IMPACT OF SABBATARIANISM  
AMONG BOOTH'S ADHERENTS**

The introduction of the Seventh Day Sabbatarian movements in Central Africa and to a lesser degree South Africa, is attributed to Booth's innovative religious activities. MacCracken, with special reference to Nyasaland, also writes, "Sabbatarianism in the Northern Province can be traced to the influence of Joseph Booth".<sup>170</sup> Through the aid of his African proteges, Booth used both a direct and indirect approach to promulgate his Seventh day Sabbath views into these countries.

We note that Morrison Malinki [born 1852 and d.1957] was the first indigenous worker to have been brought under the direct influence of Booth.<sup>171</sup> He was enrolled as a pupil at the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission from 1884 to 1890. In 1891 he worked in the printing press. Then in 1892 he married and later that year "heard that a Europeans [sic] called Mr Booth, had gone to Mandala and that he wanted teachers for his school".<sup>172</sup> He subsequently applied for the post, together with Gordon Mataka. But the links with Industrial Missions in which Booth had played such a significant role to establish was short-lived. When Booth returned from the USA in 1899 as a Sabbatarian employed under the auspices of the Sabbath Evangelizing Industrial Association, he established the Seventh Day Baptist Plainfield Mission at Thyolo. This was the first Seventh day Sabbatarian institution in Nyasaland, as noted earlier in chapter III. Malinki claimed, "Mr Booth requested that I join the Seventh Day Baptist Church and I started teaching at Shiloh Mission, Cikunda Church, which was a Michiru Hill ... in the same year my family and I

accepted the truth and kept the Sabbath of the Lord".<sup>173</sup>

Probably with the ACU scheme still in his mind, Booth immediately left Baker, a new arrival, to proceed with the work at Plainfield Mission station while he organised an African Independent institution to operate on Sabbatarian principles. Because they were poor, Malinki recalled: "Mr Booth and I took on a contract with A.L.C. Mandala and he gave me additional work in supervising his capitaos which he sent up country to recruit carriers for carrying his goods from Chikwawa to Mandala. He gave me 500 workers and I worked with them till 1901, when he bought Shiloh Mission from Frank Miller for the money he got out of the contract".<sup>174</sup> However, this account differs slightly from Booth's version, which asserted that the Shiloh Sabbath Station "was originally bought with money earned by the Seventh Day Baptist Plainfield Natives Industrial Association on Co-operative lines".<sup>175</sup> It is interesting to note that whatever the source of the funds was, it is clear that the 50 acre land was acquired without foreign aid.

By 1903, when Booth left never to return again to BCA, Malinki also decided to set up his own Seventh day Sabbath schools. He wrote, "Many people laughed at my school and said: 'The Sabbath of Mr Malinki is Saturday'. So the school was called Malinki school ... In 1903 I opened a school at Khungulu, today called Cuma, one at Milala, now called Lemu, and one at Nkata Village, which is Cileka [sic] Mission, also one Cifide or Mwansambo", and added that, "There were five schools altogether, Monekera included, these were self-supporting".<sup>176</sup> In all these places, he "taught the Sabbath of the Lord to everybody and found that the schools were progressing".<sup>177</sup> Booth's theology of the Sabbath reflected his original sabbatarian

arguments prior to his joining the Watch Tower Movement. In 1904, Hyatt <sup>178</sup> requested Malinki to close down his schools and join the Malamulo Missions together with a select number of students from each of his schools. He consented to the idea but not without reservation. Malinki worked with Branch as a teacher and translator and in 1907 when the latter left, he wanted to go back and reopen his schools, an idea that seems not to have materialized. He continued to work for the SDA organization and in 1920 was asked to take charge of a mission district and later in 1927 was ordained into the ministry as one of the first African ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Peter Nyambo, born about 1884, was another pupil educated at the Blantyre Mission from 1895 to 1900 who came under Booth's influence as regards the introduction of the Seventh day Sabbath. In 1901, Nyambo claims to have joined Booth at Plainfield Mission in Cholo, but he was not baptized as there was no 'baptismal class' or religious instruction. Langworthy observes: "This memory of a relative lack of religious indoctrination, echoed by Kamwana's memory of the same period, may have been due to either an agreed upon division of labor or the tensions between Booth and Thomas Branch, his Afro-American co-worker".<sup>179</sup> However, Nyambo's recollection of the mission routine work and Langworthy's conclusion seem not to deal adequately with the issue that led both leaders to keep a low profile. It must be remembered that Booth and his co-worker, Branch, were kept under constant surveillance by the colonial administration, who were suspicious of their possible Ethiopian views. But another pertinent cause for their low key approach

seemed doctrinal, according to Booth's observation. He writes:

The small body of Sabbath keepers a little over forty have fallen away during the past fifteen months to about half that number, owing largely to the 'no-law' or 'changed-law' theory of our missionary opponents. Some have become polygamites, arguing that if the law is done away or changed, they may adjust the law as to adultery to suit their customs, just as white men make Sunday-keeping custom to suit themselves. At present, therefore, we can count only twenty baptized Sabbath-keepers, and of these we have yet to see how many will receive the fuller advent teaching which Brother Branch is quietly unfolding to them.<sup>180</sup>

There is no doubt that religious instruction was given which led to the baptism of Kamwana by Branch,<sup>181</sup> after Kamwana had accepted the doctrines of the church including the Sabbath. But as noted, it was kept at a very low key to avoid a possible confrontation with either the government and also other missions. In 1903, Booth took Nyambo with him to England. And at a 'Camp Meeting' session in Birmingham, Booth introduced him to a Seventh-day Adventist congregation, who in turn made a collection on his behalf totalling £150 to defray his education expenses. This enabled Nyambo to be enrolled at their college at Duncombe Hall, in Holloway, where he took a two year ministerial course. He was baptized and became a member. Later he was invited to visit Germany and study at the Adventist Seminary at Friedensan in order to become acquainted with the German language. His presence at this institution was an "encouragement to young ministerial students to accept the challenge of becoming missionaries".<sup>182</sup>

In 1906, when the British SDA mission was founded, the team asked if Nyambo could go with them. "Enns and Nyambo crossed from Tanzania into Kenya ... Only one year later on Jan.2 1907 the headquarters could report that the first

British missionary had started his work at Gendia, the region Enns and Nyambo surveyed before".<sup>183</sup>

In early 1908, Nyambo returned to Plainfield Mission (Nyasaland) only to find a few changes such as that the name of the institution was now Malamulo Mission. He worked from 1908 to 1911, during which time he also assisted SM Konigmacher in the development of a new station of Matandani. But Nyambo eventually resigned because the mission authorities had mishandled bringing his belongings (books) from England and also because of the kind of school uniform the students had been supplied with at Malamulo Mission.<sup>184</sup> He pointed out that in order to avoid further arguments with them, he felt he had better leave to go and establish his own schools at his home village in Ntcheu district. But later he left for South Africa where he reunited with Booth on another scheme, to which we shall revert in chapter VI.

In 1903, when Booth was declared *persona non grata* in Nyasaland, "his role was now more indirect, though no less influential".<sup>185</sup> In South Africa he got in touch with Nyasas working there. Lohrenz states that Booth:

instructed them how to establish independent churches upon their return to Nyasaland. Between 1906 and 1909 he brought at least seven Nyasas under his tutelage, including Alexander Makwinja of Shiloh, and Jordan Ansumba, Gilbert Chihayi, and Hanson Tandu, all Tonga from West Nyasa district. He instructed them for a period of four to six months, and taught them the rather confused combination of Watch Tower teachings and Sabbatarianism to which he then adhered.<sup>186</sup>

Booth's own writings confirm this point although he places the emphasis on the

Sabbath theme when he writes: "Many may be disposed to inquire how has the existing interesting Sabbath Movement come into existence? The answer is simple, viz: by giving 4 to 6 months' training during the past years to a few earnest native students, emphasizing Sabbath Observance as an essential to salvation, much on the lines of Pastor G.B. Shaw's tract, 'A Sure Prophecy'".<sup>187</sup> The instructions dealt also with the organization of "New Testament Church of Baptized Sabbath-keepers, on returning to their people ... It is a continuation of this method for the opening out of certain large, ripe and inviting fields that I advocate".<sup>188</sup> He cited Central Africa in particular as a region that presented "probably the most favourable conditions in the world for the reception of Sabbath and other essential Bible Truths".<sup>189</sup>

Possibly the most influential African character to whom the Seventh Day Sabbath was indirectly introduced by Booth was Charles Domingo. He was a product of Livingstonia Mission. His period of instruction included more than two years of training at Lovedale Institution in South Africa and a theological course at Livingstonia. Upon completion he worked for the Free Church of Scotland as a teacher and also preacher until 1908 when he quarrelled with Donald Fraser over the issue of ordination. For a short period he associated with John Chilembwe during which he became a Baptist. He later worked as an itinerant preacher in the Zambezi Delta among "his people".<sup>190</sup> It was while there that he possibly met Elliot Kamwana who furnished him with Booth's address in South Africa. In early 1910, "Booth communicated with Domingo, sent him some money and urged him to return to the Lakeshore to help lead the movement. He also urged Domingo to consider

the importance of the seventh day".<sup>191</sup> Charles Domingo recalled that in response to Booth's appeal that in the month of September he "preached a sermon regarding the 'Day' and many members were moved so that some began to keep and observe 'The Sabbath Day'".<sup>192</sup> It must be pointed out that virtually all these members Domingo addressed were Watch Tower adherents whom Elliot Kamwana had converted during his 1908 to 1909 crusades prior to his deportation by the colonial authorities. Although Kamwana "had been baptized in 1902 as a keeper of God's Sabbath Command"<sup>193</sup> by Branch, whom Booth later described as "a staunch and Baptized Sabbath Keeper",<sup>194</sup> he himself never preached it. His excuse was that "there had been so many hard things to teach and he thought there was plenty of time to teach this test Truth later and it would then show the Wheat class truly and separate the Tares".<sup>195</sup> But Booth asserted he told him that "if he had taught the Sabbath Truth, he would have had far less followers and the Government would have let him alone".<sup>196</sup> Amid rumours of mass baptisms, the deportation of Kamwana and eventual reports of Seventh Day Baptist churches and schools springing up, Russell decided to send W.W. Johnston to investigate the progress of the work in Nyasaland. However, "Johnston's visit ironically precipitated the very condition which had necessitated it".<sup>197</sup> Although he had first been accorded a warm welcome, the situation changed when he embroiled himself in heated debate with Charles Domingo over the Sabbath issue and the Movement's view of lack of support for schools. Johnston called for a meeting with the African pastors and told them that "all those that keep the Sabbath 'are' in 'bondage' Gal.II:14 and are compared to 'Bondwoman' i.e. 'Agar' Gal.II:22 to 25".<sup>198</sup> He went further and told them that they "are not

under the law, but under grace'. Rom.VI:14. That those who are in the New Dispensation have no right to 'observe days, and months and times, and years'. Gal.IV:10".<sup>199</sup> Johnston reflected Russell's teaching when he also told the local African leaders that the "Sabbath was 'A Shadow of things to come' and 'no man' should 'judge' us regarding it. Col.II:16, 17 ... scriptures were shown, and comparisons were made of Type and Antitype".<sup>200</sup> Domingo opposed the visitor and asked him to show "the commencement of the sanctified 'Day'. He said from Mount Sinai, and I [Domingo] found out that he was in untruthful condition ... This makes me to wonder, because the opposers say that Sabbath was given only to the Jews while it is 'from the beginning' [Creation]".<sup>201</sup> In what can be described as a biblical and systematic theological exposition of scripture, Domingo set out his argument in defence of the validity of the Seventh Day Sabbath.<sup>202</sup> Wilcox and Moore, who in 1912 were also sent to investigate the state of the Sabbatarian Baptist Churches, reported, "The evidence is that there was no recognized Sabbath interest on the lake shore until after the disappointment of the natives at the time of Mr Johnston's visit ... It was at this point that the interest began to grow in the Sabbath doctrine".<sup>203</sup> Booth later summed up the cause for this dramatic shift in allegiances from Watch Tower to Sabbatarianism as due to "Pastor [Charles Taze] Russell's and his deputy Pastor Johnston's flat refusal to countenance a day Sabbath school system for learners, young and grown, has had much to do with the reaction Sabbathwards that appears to be taking place".<sup>204</sup> A leadership struggle subsequently took place between Watch Tower enthusiasts and Seventh Day Sabbath loyalists over Kamwana's converts, and this led to Domingo and certain elders moving further

Westwards (Ngoniland) to set up a chain of yet more sabbatarian congregations. Domingo displayed some skill in introducing occasional Sabbath Conference Sessions after the USA pattern. He also arranged the order of school and Sabbath services.

He wrote:

We all start our work on Sunday till Friday, and we rest and worship our Heavenly Father on 'The Sabbath' of God which Jesus Christ is also its 'Lord'. We also begin School on Sunday till Thursday (of course we do not have it on Friday, why? because we permit pupils to do their own village works before the Sabbath comes.)<sup>205</sup>

The school work at Chipata [Domingo's mission station] begins on Sunday till Thursday, and on the Sabbath resting and worshipping takes place. I have now prepared Scripture lessons (on the Sabbath) i.e. we wish to make all the pupils to learn and understand the Sabbath of God more full than they did last time.<sup>206</sup>

However it did not take long for Domingo to claim that his members encountered problems with the employers over the question of Seventh Day Sabbath observance. He stated, "They go to ask employments to different sorts of Departments, and some of these are as cruel as a tiger. Now the question, ... How will these manage to observe 'The Sabbath of God'???"<sup>207</sup> Domingo went on to complain:

If it is arranged that they should try to fight on i.e. refusing to work on The Sabbath Day called Saturday, they will be dismissed from the employment and will fail to get some money to pay for their hut-tax. The native police will come, and arrest them, they will be severely punished for their disobedience and Christianity will not sweeten them. If they are arrested; they will be thrashed with chikote [ a whip], and at the same time will get a heavy work which, they will even have to work on the denied Sabbath of God. Say, supposing there were to be strong members who would refuse (after having been thrashed) to work on the Sabbath: and suppose they are thrashed again and again until they die. Will this make them or praise them, that they have then suffered for the sake of Christ.<sup>208</sup>

Some scholars have refuted Domingo's allegations, describing them as highly

exaggerated. However, Domingo took the issue seriously, to the extent that he suggested that an arrangement with the 'Nyasaland Government' be sought "for the sake of conscience the Nyasaland Sabbathers be permitted not to work on the Sabbath Day of God 'made for man'. And that they start their work on Sunday instead of Monday, and stop their work before the Sabbath begins".<sup>209</sup> He even went further to suggest that if every other option failed, the American Sabbath Tract Society be requested to intervene "for us here in East (The Sun Rise)".<sup>210</sup> Similar refusal of European employers to grant sabbatarians exemption from work on Saturdays was described by Booth in a letter to Plainfield in USA. He wrote: "With shame, I as an Englishman from personal sight and knowledge have to confess that, as Nyasaland law stands and has stood since 1892, this [arrest and flogging] is the almost certain and lawful treatment due to follow consistent Sabbath keeping under the average European or government employer".<sup>211</sup> Lohrentz observes, "For the more conscientious sabbatarians, this could have been an issue of considerable significance".<sup>212</sup> Wilcox and Moore were confronted with the issue and "Typical was the statement of Mumuhere Mkandawire, a sabbatarian at Matuli, who explained that 'When we are employed we suffer from our masters. We try to tell them this is the Sabbath for rest but they do not heed us'.<sup>213</sup> It may have been for this reason that Booth and Domingo as co-editors began to publish 'The African Sabbath Recorder', whose keynote was 'The Sabbath for all' and whose purpose among other reasons, they described as for "the need of the Free yet struggling African Native Churches to voice their needs to their sympathisers, and their plea in Africa for Sabbath restoration to all professing loyalty to Christ".<sup>214</sup>

Domingo followed Booth, his mentor, in opposing Russell's theology of the Sabbath, stating that he sometimes wondered "that such a notable man such as Russell who is counted an op'ner of the Bible should himself fall from the truth of the Holy Sabbath", adding, "I wish I could match him".<sup>215</sup> However, the assessment of Moore and Wilcox seems to suggest that Domingo and his fellow cohorts tended to follow the pattern not only of Booth but the Sabbatarian Anabaptists in their hermeneutical principle of biblical interpretation. They reported, "We found them proficient in biblical knowledge, but eager to understand apocalyptic scripture and having a decided tendency toward literalism and materialism in their interpretation of prophetic passages".<sup>216</sup>

Booth was not always successful in his bid to influence Africans to follow his Sabbatarian ideas. John Chilembwe is a good example; he contacted PIM and said, "Why not let those of your members keep the 7th day Sabbath of the Bible, who are willing to do so", and then showed signs of a shift from his Seventh Day stance when he added, "and leave those who like Sunday to meet then".<sup>217</sup> Booth reminded Chilembwe that it was a policy he had adopted while together at ZIM. But Chilembwe responded, "As to be understood you are aiming that we should work together by changing Sunday into Sabbath day. Father what profit can a man get on Sunday or Sabbath, are both days essential to the salvation of souls of truth you have said".<sup>218</sup> Chilembwe dismissed both days; neither Sunday nor Saturday, in his view, was essential to man's salvation. And he expressed the hope that this difference of opinion would not strain their relationship, neither would it lessen the high esteem

Pastor J. Booth. Maria Jephtha. Evangelist David. Pastor Zenzeli Ntlonga. Evangelist Zachariah.

Mr. Peter Klew  
(Associate Member).



Zachariah's Wife.

Annie S. Booth.

Sister of Zachariah.

Mrs. Peter Klew.

Mary Winifred Booth.

**Plate 11.** Joseph Booth and his Seventh Day Sabbatarian group in Cape Town, South Africa, possibly between 1910-1912. Note: names identified on the photograph.

in which he held Booth.

Exiled in South Africa, Booth remained committed to the Sabbatarian cause. He was reported as "an ardent advocate of the Sabbath and preaches upon the Sabbath question at open air meetings in the down-town district of Cape Town".<sup>219</sup> He considered Cape Town as the main centre for his Sabbath Reform. The building at 49 Prestwich Street<sup>220</sup> was used for school purposes and Sabbath services for Africans. He also claimed to have associated with white, 'coloured' and black people, who he said had assisted him in the mission school by teaching and others in translating sabbatarian tracts. It must be said, however, that his influence over them regarding the Sabbath was meagre. He cited the following groups as bearing "pure and true Sabbath truth: others in the Sabbath ... plus 'something' ... Here they are:"

1. The De Beer Party. Dutch (White)
2. The Pastor Orr Party. Coloured, Dutch speaking
3. The Zulu Student Preacher
4. The Native Location Party. Sisuber
5. The Pastor Matashe Zentile Ntlonga Zisdogi Party
6. The Pastor W.W. Olifan Party
7. The Pastor Wessels Party (White Dutch)<sup>221</sup>

The most notable from these groups who directly came under the influence of Booth was that of M.Z. Ntlonga, a Seventh Day Sabbatarian stationed at Amatole Basin. He had previously been a Sunday Baptist Evangelist but a year later accepted the Seventh Day Sabbath from the Adventists. Under the influence of Booth he left the Adventists and joined the SDB's. In 1911, Booth asked Ntlonga to go to Nyasaland

and strengthen the SDB congregations and their leaders. But upon his arrival at Chinde he was detained by the British Consul. On the 9th November he wrote "English Consul can't give me permission to enter Nyasaland. He took Secretary's Shaw's letter and sent it to the Governor at Zomba. He told me to stay outside with Portuguese till Governor sends answer".<sup>222</sup> But he later fell ill and died without fulfilling his mission. Later, when Wilcox and Moore had made enquiries from the colonial authorities, they issued the following communique:

that Ntlonga had been kept from entering Nyasaland because of insufficient funds; and because he was an emissary of Mr Booth; the latter reason would have caused his detention even if he had been free to return home at any time, but no one would be allowed to enter Nyasaland who was sent by Mr Booth.<sup>223</sup>

There was a deep sense of shock and dismay among Nyasaland pastors, especially from Charles Domingo and the same applied in South Africa. His African colleagues took a collection and also "expressed their sorrow at Ntlonga's death and their sympathy with his family".<sup>224</sup>

The Sabbatarian question was central to Booth's understanding of his calling and of the Gospel for a significant period of his life. His passionate commitment to it has had a permanent impact on Malawi. Without Booth it can be argued, there would not be the flourishing Seventh-day Adventist and Seventh Day Baptist churches that there are in Malawi today, whatever the present leadership of these groups think about their past connection to Booth.

Booth's sabbath concern was not some eccentric concern of an eccentric man, but was the product of a determination to follow Scripture alone and to refuse the

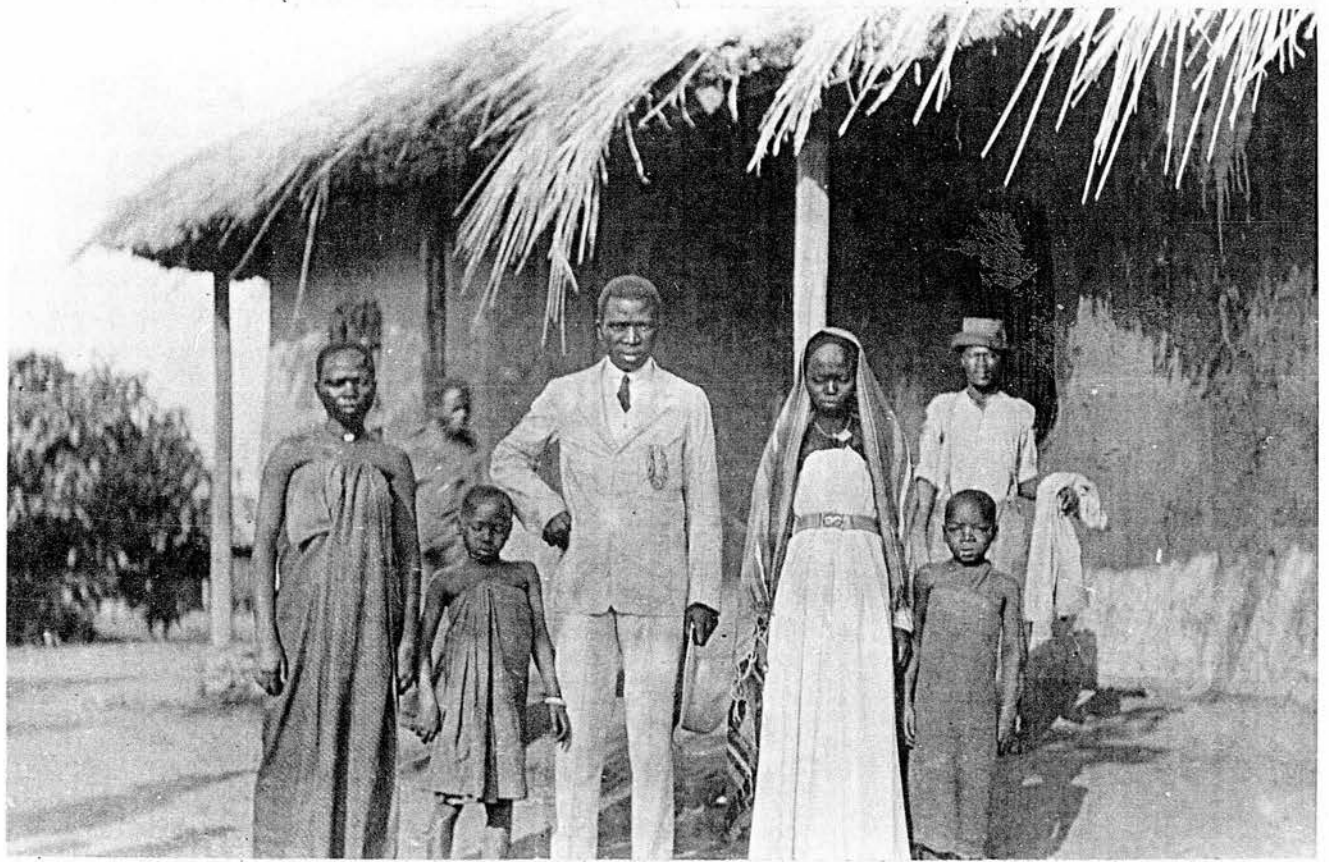


Plate 12. Jacob Chigowo (Booth's protégé) with his household. He was a Seventh Day Baptist Sabbatarian and associate leader with Charles Domingo in West Nyasa between 1910-1912.

traditions of men. It was thus that he was able to call Cardinal Gibbons' writing to his aid. He was challenging mainstream Protestantism in exactly the way the Anabaptists challenged the followers of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. The latter's persistent upon belief in 'sola scriptura' was turned against them by the Anabaptists, and again by Booth, if Scripture was the sole rule of faith then the Sabbath which Jesus had observed still stood. His position was well argued and consistent, it was not a product of eccentricity.

We shall now consider Booth and his millennial influence in Central and Southern Africa.

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55. *Ibid.*
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- "(1) The Sabbath must be kept because it is one of the Ten Commandments. (2) The Patriarchs before Moses, Moses himself, the prophets, and the apostles kept the Sabbath. (3) The New Testament teaches the Decalogue, and thus the Sabbath, and stresses the importance of keeping it. (4) Christ, the apostles, and the early fathers of the Church kept the Sabbath holy. (5) Paul and the apostles held meetings on the Sabbath. (6) The Christians after Christ's time assembled for many years on the Sabbath. (7) Men, Pope Victor and Emperor Constantine ordered the keeping of Sunday, but God instituted and commanded the keeping of Sabbath. (8) Those who do not keep the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments are transgressors of the law. (9) On grounds of faith the Christian upholds the law, including the Sabbath. (10) The Decalogue will remain until the end of the world; it is eternal and binding (Gerhard F. Hasel, *Sabbatarian Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century. Op. Cit.* part II, pp. 27-28) See also Gerhard F. Hasel, 'Capito, Schwenckfeld and Crantwald on Sabbatarian Anabaptist Theology. *Op. Cit.* p.56.
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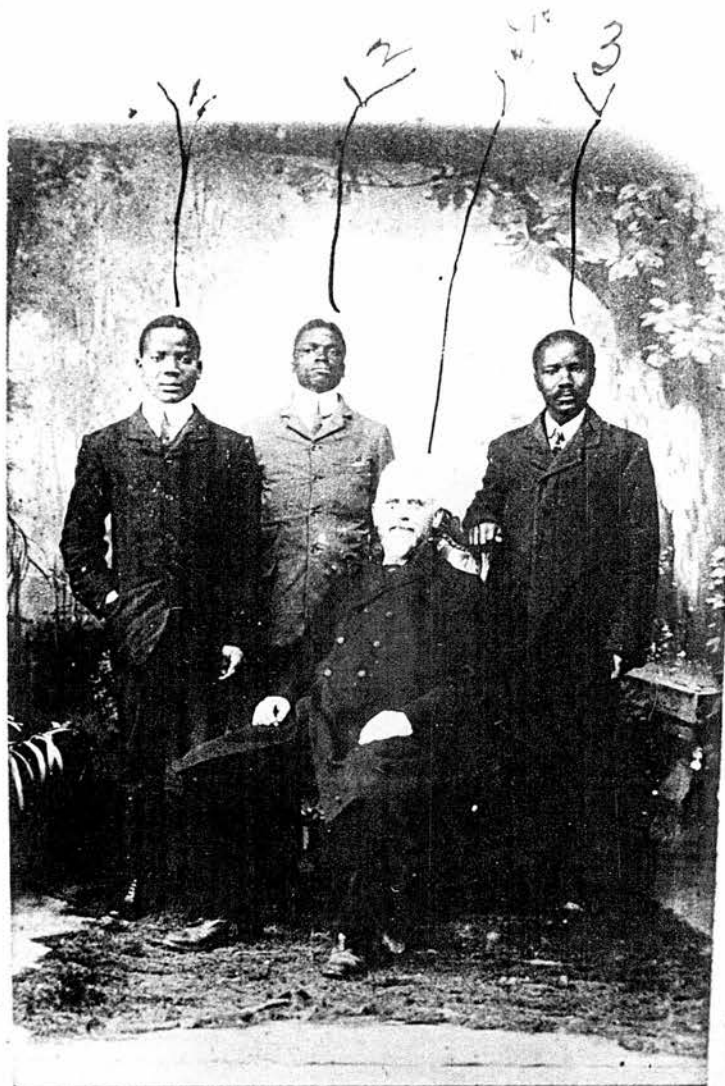
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1 Samuel Makhafiso, Makhanya  
2 Elliott Kamwana, Ndeyana  
3 Paul Matibane, Bantwana  
4 Joseph Booth

Plate 13. Joseph Booth with African Watch Tower Millenarian protégés in South Africa, probably taken in 1908. Elliot Kamwana (standing centre) is featured in detail in Chapter V.

**CHAPTER V****BOOTH AND THE WATCH TOWER MILLENARIANISM**

We briefly noted in Chapter II Booth's early contacts with Charles T. Russell, the leader of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. This Chapter, however, attempts to examine the millennial ideology as first expounded by Russell and then through Booth's influence transmitted to Kamwana and others. It is interesting to note that Booth seemed not to write or comment much on the doctrine of millennium especially when compared to other themes such as missions and the Sabbath. And yet one sees that Booth's association with Russell had lasting results. Langworthy notes, "For almost three years he was able to establish the Watch Tower movement among Africans of South Africa, Nyasaland, Southern Rhodesia, from where it spread to neighbouring areas".<sup>1</sup> Kamwana, one of Booth's protégés, is given prominence in this chapter, primarily because it was through this charismatic leader that the African version of millennialism was spread into Central Africa. Sholto Cross states, "Kamwana attracted a large following, and an Africanist version of Russell's and Booth's ideas was spread by the Kamwana Society Church, the first institutional form of the Watch Tower".<sup>2</sup> But first we shall briefly trace Russell's millennial influence to ascertain its origins. It is noteworthy, however, to point out that in general, Russell's millennial theology entailed "God's Plan of the Ages, or the course of human history from the fall of man to the 'end of all things'".<sup>3</sup>

### RUSSELL AND THE MILLENARIAN INFLUENCES

The Watch Tower millennial doctrine shows traces of both early 19th century British and American millenarian influence. Sandeen asserts, "By the middle of the nineteenth century British millenarian theology had been imported into the United States and had become the most popular form of American millenarianism".<sup>4</sup> and further states that "the development of Americanism owes most of its character to its British heritage"<sup>5</sup> Charles T. Russell, despite being self-educated and relatively devoid of any formal theological training, became the founder of one of the largest sects of the twentieth century, known today as the Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>6</sup> One sees that in the main his millennial doctrine centred on numerical calculations of biblical dates. In Russell's volume III of the 'Studies in the Scriptures' series entitled Thy Kingdom Come, he sheds some light as regards the source of his millennial influence. He does not discuss or even refer to the Book of Revelation so often used by millennial writers. Russell concentrates on passages from the prophecies of Daniel, which indicates that he followed William Miller's ideas, in spite of the fact that he argues that his Society disagreed "with Mr Miller's interpretations and deductions, on almost every point - viewing, as well as the manner and the time, of our Lord's coming, in a very different light."<sup>7</sup> Miller was a 19th century Adventist Baptist minister during the Second Great Awakening period in America. In his preaching he mainly dwelt on Daniel Chapters 8 and 12 to assert his conclusion that the Lord's coming and the end of the world would take place in 1844.<sup>8</sup> The prediction failed to materialise and such hope ended in disappointment. However, about thirty years later, Russell adopted one of the Millerite passages, Daniel 12:11, 12 which read as follows: "And

from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days". And we note that based on this passage, Russell made certain adjustments to William Miller's calculations and arrived at his own conclusion. He argued that Miller:

made the mistake of not starting the 1290 and 1335 periods at the same point. Had he done so he would have been right. On the contrary he started them thirty years sooner - about 509 instead of 539, which ended the 1335 days in 1844, instead of 1874.<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of such a premise, Russell went even further to account that his so-called interpretation was more accurate than that of Miller: "Disappointment was predicted for the first movement and waiting for the 1335 days was necessary; but the second was not a disappointment, and waiting was no longer necessary, for the fulfilment came exactly at the close of 1335 prophetic days - in October 1874".<sup>10</sup> And hence Russell reached the conclusion that Christ did return to earth in 1874 but only in spirit. And in that same year the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was then founded and 1874 became a key date that inaugurated what the organisation considered as 'The harvest message' whose period of 40 years spanned "from the fall of A.D. 1874, the termination of the '1335 days' to the fall of A.D. 1914".<sup>11</sup> One notices that Russell's millennial notions were ambiguous from the very start. For instance when called upon in 1907 to ascertain on what grounds he affirmed "that our Lord's personal presence began in 1874 and will continue until the end of the Millennial Age?"<sup>12</sup> He replied "The Scriptures say that He [Jesus] must reign a

thousand years. Therefore, we see that when His presence came in 1874 it was intended to last the whole thousand years".<sup>13</sup> It is unclear whether his reference to the figure 1,000 years was drawn from the Daniel passages he earlier used or from the apocalypse of John in Revelation Chapter 20. Pike makes the observation that "Nowadays 1874 seems to have been dropped from Societys chronology", and then adds "Now all the emphasis is put on 1914".<sup>14</sup>

However, even the 1914 date was reached through a completely different calculation system which in fact he may have borrowed from the British millenarians.<sup>15</sup> He wrote, "Zedekiah lost his crown in the year 606BC, and from here - 606BC - measuring down 2,520 years to the best of our knowledge and belief will expire with October, 1914".<sup>16</sup> Russell's millennial chronology seems to have followed to a large extent that of Guinness, an evangelical theologian and missionary who founded in 1873 the East London Institute for Home and Foreign Missions. There is an explicable similarity between Guinness's "CHRONOLOGICAL CHART, exhibiting the Range of the Prophetic Times and the Eras of their commencement and close"<sup>17</sup> designed about 1860, compared to Russell's "CHART OF THE AGES ILLUSTRATING THE PLAN OF GOD FOR BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY AND HIS PURPOSE".<sup>18</sup> The chronology in both charts shows three main distinct Biblical dispensations, namely Patriarchal Age, the Jewish Age and the Gentile Age leading eventually to the beginning of the millennium.<sup>19</sup> Although Russell never refers directly to Guinness, his chart is almost a direct copy, so that it is clear Russell's work is not so much original as based on the teaching of William Miller and Guinness.<sup>20</sup>

**RUSSELL-BOOTH ASSOCIATION AND THE ORIGINS OF THE  
WATCH TOWER MOVEMENT IN BRITISH CENTRAL AND SOUTH AFRICA**

The earliest traces of Watch Tower Millennial ideas to Africa seem to have been undertaken by Samuel W. Seaton in 1887. As a migrant and self-supporting missionary to Liberia, he brought a consignment of Russell's Millennial Dawn volumes together with copies of Zion's Watch Tower to Monrovia from Pennsylvania.<sup>21</sup> However, his efforts were short-lived. The effective beginning of Watch Tower influence in Africa came when in 1902 a Dutch Reformed minister from Holland arrived in South Africa with a box containing Russell's literature.<sup>22</sup> When this literature was examined by Frans Ebersohn and Stoffel Fourie, they both expressed interest and decided to form an organization called "Valheid van Christus [Fullness of Christ]".<sup>23</sup> The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society consider this group as marking "the very first foothold of the Kingdom message in South Africa".<sup>24</sup> However, when in 1903 Ebersohn attempted to influence Russell to consider appointing an official Representative in South Africa for his Society, he declined claiming the circumstances did not warrant such a move. The reply was not a surprise, given the fact that Russell himself was not keen to start evangelising Africa, especially among the black people. And indeed it was basically on this same issue that Booth and Russell first confronted each other in 1906. It is important to point out that the Watch Tower Society, on what it considered as theological grounds, did rule out any missionary involvement because "In 1878 the Gospel dispensation ceased and since that time all missionary effort has been in vain".<sup>25</sup> The 'harvest message',

as it was known, only applied to a special group who belonged to other Christian Churches; and that the work was to terminate in October 1914. This, it seems was the Society's mandate, to proselytise Christians from other churches. However, Booth was astounded on learning that black people were excluded from being evangelised at that time. Russell tactfully told Booth:

We informed our dear brother that we too, were interested in the coloured people - yea, in all mankind; but that seeing the way of the Lord more particularly than we once did, we no longer feel that the salvation of the world is a responsibility upon our shoulders, but upon the Lord's where it belongs; and that as we had come to understand his Word we found therein that he had not neglected his responsibility to his creatures, but had made full provision through Jesus for all the sons and daughters of Adam and that in due time under the Millennial Kingdom all are to be brought to a knowledge of truth. We assured him of our sympathy with mission work and every kind of good work for the reformation and uplifting of all the members of our race, but that our understanding is that the harvest work differs considerably from sowing work, a planting work.<sup>26</sup>

Russell went further to inform Booth that it was his belief "that the harvest time into which we have entered [since 1878] is in our view designed of the Lord for the ripening or perfecting of character amongst those who are his".<sup>27</sup> The chosen 'elite' would then serve as 'kings' and 'priests' together with Christ during the 'coming age' to promote the knowledge of God to those excluded during the so-called 'harvest message' period. It must be emphasized that Russell only envisaged the conversion of black people during the millennium and not before. And hence his reluctance to encourage any undertaking of missionary work primarily in Africa. However Russell noted Booth's rebuttal to such ideas with keen interest especially when he heard him argue "that if manifestations of Christian love were to be taken as an indication of Christian character (to which we agreed) then he would assure us that there were

some true Christians amongst the blacks of Africa as any he had ever found amongst the whites anywhere".<sup>28</sup> Booth challenged Russell that in his opinion, judging from his experiences with Africans, he noted they were "very earnest preachers of the Word and quite willing to lay down their lives, if the occasion required, in the service of the truth, so far as they understood it".<sup>29</sup> And said it was his impeccable view that black people possessed the "right condition of heart and mind to receive the glad message of the Millennial morning".<sup>30</sup> And in the end to what the Society viewed as a "very interesting and crucial discussion",<sup>31</sup> Russell was led to concede:

But Brother Booth's zeal for the black brethren has had the effect of stimulating our interest in them, and the more we reflect on the subject the more deeply interested do we feel in the harvest work among those people right at our doors.<sup>32</sup>

And hence Booth's persuasiveness was here seen as instrumental in influencing Russell to reconsider his theology of mission in order to incorporate not even only the peoples of Africa but also those of African descent in the New World. Cross affirms that Booth was indeed a major influence,

who through his tales of experience dispelled the idea of Africa as a land of unremitting savagery, and converted Russell to an interest in the salvation of black people, not only in Africa but also in Jamaica, Puerto Rico and America - somewhat ineptly claimed by a newly enthusiastic Russell as 'the nearer fields white for harvest'.<sup>33</sup>

Early 1907, after winning support from Russell, Booth was granted funds to return to Africa as the first official representative of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society based in Cape Town, South Africa. It is not clear what precise plans of operation were discussed or agreed between them; but Langworthy expresses that "given the autocratic controls Russell exercised in the movement, it was unlikely that

Booth was given a completely blank check to spread the harvest message where he wanted in his own ways".<sup>34</sup> Such an assessment may be correct, given that Booth later recalled their differences when he said, "during the four years since 1906 Russell had constantly opposed the plan of selecting and teaching special ones as leaders, preferring extended preaching tours".<sup>35</sup> This conflict is not surprising, given the character of the two men. Russell was renowned as a leader "eager to detect and punish signs of doctrinal deviation or independency of initiative"<sup>36</sup> to which no doubt Booth, who always desired freedom to follow where Scripture led him. This is enough to explain the brevity of their association, which terminated in 1909, as we shall now consider.

#### **BOOTH AND THE WATCH TOWER SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA 1907-1909**

Booth arrived in South Africa 1907 and made his home at Clifton-on-Sea near Cape Town. He then contacted Peregrino, the editor and proprietor of the South African Spectator at his office "to order advertisement for his pamphlet 'Time of Restitution of All Things'"<sup>37</sup> But when Booth further approached Peregrino to request the use of his rooms for meeting purposes for the new organization, the latter "declined as he thought that Booth's organization was of a seditious character".<sup>38</sup> It is not clear what led Peregrino to reach such conclusions. It may be that Peregrino was aware of Booth's 'African Christian Union' scheme and the agitation it left in its wake in 1896. It must also be pointed out that the title of Booth's advertisement, which was designed to attract African students to train as Watch Tower evangelists,

was 'The Time of Restitution of all Things'. This was a Russelite expression which was essentially other-worldly. However, Booth had used the words in his 'Africa for the African' ACU manifesto with regard to Biblical Restitution, which was material and spiritual together.<sup>39</sup> And hence, a few years later when Johnston visited Nyasaland, he found that "the work among the African natives cannot hope to rise above the level of a restitution work".<sup>40</sup> And hinted that the Africans were not capable of grasping the millennial truths, as Booth noted:

Johnston's own estimate, African natives of Nyasaland are unfit for the prize and crown of the high calling of God. i.e. they cannot be of the royal priesthood, whom Russell reckons he is calling out at this time and until the close of 1914. Hence on his showing Russellism has no place for them, admitting, however, that 'there may be eminent exceptions'.<sup>41</sup>

It is worth noting also that Booth considered the term 'restitution' not only in a religious sense but also in a political sense, and that was to restore "Africa to the Africans".<sup>42</sup> And this may as well have led Peregrino to inform Windham, the Secretary of Native Affairs that "Booth is a very dangerous man as he teaches the doctrine: Africa for the African".<sup>43</sup> And he went further to suggest that Booth "was very successful in persuading many Africans to join his organization that is based in Allegheny, Cely, Pa, USA."<sup>44</sup> With such disclosures from Peregrino, Windham it seems alerted the police, who in turn decided to infiltrate Booth's Watch Tower organization in order to follow closely his activities. An African detective known only as 'Philip' was deployed to shadow Booth in Pretoria and to report back to the police headquarters. The detective's first duty was to befriend John David, one of Booth's African students. He reported that Booth had at least 12 Africans and 8 Europeans

as students under his care and whom he was providing with private lessons. It was known that no-one was admitted to attend his lectures unless registered as a member. David told Philip that:

he could not give him any further information unless he joined as a member of Booth's school, as he [Booth] was teaching theology and it was dangerous in the Transvaal.

Booth has informed them not to say anything [to] either Black or White as he has a lot of enemies".<sup>45</sup>

Although Philip failed to enter Booth's school at first, he nonetheless succeeded second time round. He is reported to have attended a Church service at Park Hotel on 22nd May 1909 at 11.00 am, during which, apart from Booth reminding them of the significance of the Seventh Day Sabbath, to which he still adhered, he also said:

Although the English has this bad treatment on us we must know clearly that after 5 years (i.e.) after 1914, we are going to rule ourselves and all these Kings and Queens, Governments and Judges who are ruling us here in the world they are all going to be destroyed and we are going to be equal as they are, (i.e.) No one will govern us, we will have their equal rights we will be just as the same as the King is, we shall rule ourselves, we shall have our own laws and Rights".<sup>46</sup>

Such a message was later reflected in the teaching of his African proteges, especially Kamwana, as we shall soon discover. Booth stressed the need of co-operation and unity among Africans themselves and also with Afro-Americans, of whom he said "brothers in America they are preparing for us and so also we must prepare for them".<sup>47</sup> Booth's millennial message also included the return of the Jews to Palestine, of which he said, "After 5 years all are going back to Jerusalem to their home, and are going to rebuild their city and so we Gentiles we will have to pray so that when the end of the world comes in 1914 that we may be children of Christ".<sup>48</sup> Booth also

insisted in his discourse that there was no hell "because God could not say he loves us and then burn us".<sup>49</sup> After Booth's doctrines and activities were reported by Philip, H.P. Trew, a police inspector, summed up that Booth had:

opened a College at Pretoria at Park Hotel for religious instruction of Natives in the doctrine known as 'Church of Christ Millennium Dawn'. The object of this College is to train Natives to be sent out to different parts of Africa to preach the doctrine of this Church ...

The principal belief of this Church is that in 5 years time the Millennium will begin when all Governments, Kings, Princes and powers of this world shall be wiped away, and that every person will be governed by the power of God alone. I understand that Mr Booth tells the Natives that when that time arrives all people and tongues will be equal and there will be no more oppression of sin".<sup>50</sup>

There is no doubt that Booth's millennial ideas with socio-political connotations were being heard in wider circles of South Africa in spite of imposing strict orders to his adherents not to divulge any information to 'outsiders'. An anonymous letter addressed to Windham on 6 September 1909 described Booth as an 'anarchist' at heart. The writer went on:

Teaches that man's authority should not be recognised or tolerated, also teaches that there is no future punishment and that those who are not saved now, will have an opportunity to be saved beyond the grave. Such teachings are dangerous at all times, and especially now among the natives here.<sup>51</sup>

It must be stated also that although Booth's main effort was among Africans, he also gained some success "in Cape Town with Europeans and Coloureds".<sup>52</sup> Among these were Louis De Beer, Rev. J.H. Orr and a minister of an Independent Congregational Church.

**BOOTH - KAMWANA ASSOCIATION AND THE GENERAL SPREAD OF THE  
WATCH TOWER MOVEMENT IN CENTRAL AFRICA**

Booth and Kamwana first met at Malamulo Seventh-day Adventist College after the latter had severed links with the Free Church of Scotland at Livingstonia Mission. Indeed, Booth described him as a new arrival who was "an intelligent English speaking youth from Atonga tribe, ... from Bandawe, Lake Nyassa, Northend".<sup>53</sup> They stayed together for only six months and Booth left for America in 1903. Kamwana also left in the subsequent year for South Africa, where he worked as a hospital assistant at Maine Reef mine, Rooderport, near Johannesburg. Booth and Kamwana got in touch again in 1908. When giving evidence before the Chilembwe Commission Kamwana alleged it was Booth who first had initiated the contact between them when he was a student at Lovedale. He recalled Booth's letter to him stating, "I am asking you to come down to study for yourself, I have got the books and the books are teaching the things which you don't understand".<sup>54</sup> However, Langworthy disputes Kamwana's assertion and prefers Phiri's argument that Booth's advertisement in the South African Spectator was his main attraction. "Kamwana read an advertisement about the Watch Tower church in South Africa and sent an application to be trained as a preacher".<sup>55</sup> Kamwana then joined Booth in May, 1908 at Cape Town and with him were other African students from Nyasaland and South Africa. Moore and Wilcox's report noted that Booth "taught the views of Pastor Russell to certain natives, among them one Elliot Kamwana, a native of Lakeshore [Nkhata-Bay] district of Nyasaland, who went from Johannesburg to Cape Town to

study with Mr Booth, about May, 1908".<sup>56</sup> Kamwana received four to six months training in both Watch Tower and Sabbatarian doctrines. Booth later recalled that it was in fact he who had provided his protege with meals and accommodation apart from instruction in doctrine. When Kamwana completed his period of training under Booth, he left for Nyasaland with Russell's approval. He arrived in September, 1908, and for a brief period settled at Shiloh or Chikunda, Booth's old station. However, his ministry met with little success and he therefore decided to proceed to Bandawe, his home area, in October, where he possibly hoped to gain more popular support. For about two months he worked quietly to gain the confidence of his people. MacMinn, a Livingstonia missionary, noted that "his first step was to go round the whole district talking cautiously with the people, carefully noting their desire and dissatisfaction that existed among them, and so getting a grip of the situation".<sup>58</sup> But by December, Kamwana changed his tactic to a rather more forthright approach, which entailed holding public meetings and touring various places. "The villages where Elliot did the most of his work were Bandawe, Chifira, Chintechi, Dyaka, Sanga, Osisya, and others along the shore of the Lake from Bandawe north. Osisya seems to have been one of the main points".<sup>59</sup> In all these places it is believed that Kamwana stuck fairly closely to the Watch Tower orthodox doctrines when he preached to his audiences. However it is also argued that his doctrines had "a political significance upon their religious life".<sup>60</sup> Sharpe, the Governor of Nyasaland, in his despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, stated that Kamwana "was attracting large congregations of Natives in the West Nyasa District by his preachings and teachings, and that his teachings were a

dangerous and seditious nature".<sup>61</sup> He alleged that from sworn evidence made by both Europeans and Africans he had ascertained that Kamwana's doctrine entailed:

That in October, 1914, the second Advent will take place, that Christ will then abolish all the present forms of Government; that there will be no more taxation; that all the White population will disappear from Nyasaland; and that the country will be placed entirely in the hands of the Natives, who will govern themselves.<sup>62</sup>

MacMinn echoed such observations and even went further, to say that Kamwana's message was that "These people there (indicating the Residency on the hill) you soon will see no more; for the Government will go".<sup>63</sup> The message was received with enthusiasm by crowds that ranged from 5,000 to 10,000 people, many of whom Kamwana claimed to have baptized. The colonial government, which had reacted to Kamwana's crusade with consternation, decided to stop him, arguing that "any delay might have caused serious native complications".<sup>64</sup> The socio-political aspect of his doctrine will be dealt with in the subsequent chapter, when we discuss Booth's 'Africa for the African' scheme. The colonial authorities, especially in Nyasaland, considered Kamwana's teaching to be both misleading and seditious. The interrogation by the Commission of Inquiry expressed Kamwana's views regarding the events of 1914 and its millennial doctrine:

Chairman: What were you teaching about 1914?

Kamwana: I told them that in 1914, as far as we understand from scripture, was the full control of the world by Jesus Christ, and that His presence was still there, and that gradually He would take control over all the world that the blessing of the people would come - the beginning of the millennium.

Turnbull: Did you not mention that it would begin in October 1914?

Kamawana: Yes

Chairman: That is the new dispensation.

Kamwana: Yes

Chairman: Did Mr Ockenden [Chintheche Resident] speak to you about this teaching of yours?

Kamwana: Yes

Chairman: Did he say you were not to preach it?

Kamwana: Yes.

Chairman: Did he say why?

Kamwana: Because in preaching it you disturb the minds of men.<sup>65</sup>

However, the colonial governor authorized Ockenden, the resident, to detain Kamwana under the 'Political Removal and Detention of Natives Ordinance 1909'<sup>66</sup> until the necessary inquiries were complete. Hence he was arrested:

On March 18th last ... He was simply interrogated as to his religious beliefs, nevertheless he was detained in prison until about May 4th when he was removed to Zomba to be further examined by the Governor Sir A. Sharpe.<sup>67</sup>

But within two days of Kamwana's detention and his subsequent despatch to Zomba for interrogation, about 9,126 of his converts sent a telegram to lobby the Governor to have their leader released. The petition read,

Been baptized by Elliot[;] hearing his preaching in Bible soothes our hearts[;] it gives no harm to government[;] if any complaints reached you is jealousy. Not having two churches in Livingstonia. Oh Governor we cry for help from you.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, at the Government House in Zomba Kamwana fiercely defended his theological teaching, telling Sharpe that he believed it was "the teachings of Christ as related in the New Testament".<sup>69</sup> He also denied the charge "that there was any probability of upsetting the Native population and causing trouble".<sup>70</sup> But in spite of putting up such a formidable defence of his position, Kamwana was left with two choices: "either that he should reside at or near Fort Anderson in Mlanje District, where he would be entirely free, provided that he refrained from all teaching but would have to report himself every other day to the Resident:- or that he should return to South Africa where he recently came".<sup>71</sup> Kamwana may have wished to stay but not under the terms or conditions of house arrest they demanded him to be under. And hence Kamwana decided to opt for the latter choice to return to Cape Town, possibly with the intention of rejoining his mentor, Booth. And because he had decided to leave the country, the Governor went so far as to order his Vice Consul at Chinde in future to allow "neither Kamwana nor any other of Joseph Booth's emissaries to proceed from that Port to the Protectorate".<sup>72</sup> Sharpe emphatically denied that his action on Kamwana was harsh and unjust, adding that it had received the support and endorsement of both Scottish and Dutch Reformed Missions, who felt every measure should be taken to prevent "the entrance into Nyasaland of any of these 'Ethiopian' doctrines".<sup>73</sup> There is no doubt that in the mind of the Governor the main central figure of this whole drama was Booth, who he claimed was a "standing menace to any country having a Black population".<sup>74</sup> Immediately after the deportation of Kamwana to South Africa, he toured the West Nyasa District in particular to ascertain the impact the revival left in its wake. His

itinerary took him:

from Zomba overland to Fort Johnston (at the South end of Lake Nyasa) thence by the Government steamer 'Guendolen' to Karonga at the North end of the Lake, touching at Government Stations and Missions, and from Karonga overland through the North Nyasa, Mombera, Marimba [Mzimba], Central Angoniland, South Nyasa and Upper Shire Districts to Zomba.<sup>75</sup>

During the tour, he also learned that Booth had already "sent two more native preachers and a European who was styled 'Brother Brink'.<sup>76</sup> The two Africans were identified as Gilbert Chihayi and Hanson Tandu, both Tongas from Kamwana's home area. It is, however, also believed that Alex Makwinja arrived with them but had gone straight to Shiloh or Chikunda, where he operated the Watch Tower movement in the area. Hanson Tandu was, however, arrested immediately when it was found he was a deserter from the King's African Rifles and he was detained under the King's African Rifles Ordinance.<sup>77</sup> The European identified as Brink had "reached the Atonga District not by the way of Chinde and the ordinary route through the Protectorate, but by the way of North Eastern Rhodesia"<sup>78</sup>. And that in itself increased the suspicion of the colonial authorities. It was alleged that no-one had been aware of his presence in the country until his arrival at NKhata Bay. The Government sources noted:

Brink arrived at Nkhata Bay in West Nyasa District on the 15th of October, having entered the Protectorate through North Eastern Rhodesia. At the date of his arrival he was seriously ill with malarial fever ... he died, - on the 17th of October, 1909.<sup>79</sup>

There were certainly some fears on the part of the colonial authorities as to what Booth intended to do after the deportation of Kamwana, judging especially from the stealthy manner in which Brink got into the Protectorate. This resulted in another

crackdown of the so-called suspected agents of Booth. However, a considerable number of Kamwana's supporters and converts maintained their allegiance to their exiled leader, although an internal power struggle led some to follow Charles Domingo, the leader of the Sabbatarians.<sup>80</sup>

One important thing to note is that Booth did not take the deportation of Kamwana from the country lightly. And hence he tried to persuade the members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in the United Kingdom to lobby their Members of Parliament to have the matter raised in the House of Commons. Booth sent a standard letter of which copies were made and distributed to members of the Society in England and Scotland. The response of the Watch Tower adherents was instant and indeed they flooded their Members of Parliament with letters of complaint. For instance, F.E. Smith MP revealed that the arrest of Kamwana had been troubling his constituency.<sup>81</sup> The Lobbyists went on to express that Kamwana's issue was a "case of injustice and oppression".<sup>82</sup> They refuted the allegation that his beliefs were "in the slightest degree socialistic or calculated to rouse rebellion," and continued, "It is entirely Religious and non-political, and being based upon Scripture enjoins implicit obedience to the civil magistrate."<sup>83</sup> What perturbed them even more was the manner in which Kamwana was treated. They alleged he "was suddenly arrested brought before the RM court at Chinteche, Bandawe. No charge was made against the prisoner, no accusers appeared no witnesses were called. He was simply interrogated as to his religious beliefs".<sup>84</sup> The other concern was the manner in which Kamwana:

was sent from Zomba to Chinde under the charge of an armed soldier, put on board a German steamer and conveyed to Cape Town as a deck passenger, exposed to the weather and never allowed to take shelter of

any kind. It is only one who has been to sea in tramp steamer can fully understand the suffering of such a position.<sup>85</sup>

The Members of Parliament who received letters from their constituencies and then attempted to raise the issue with Colonel Seely, the Secretary of State for the Colonies were as follows:

- Keir Hardie - First Leader of the Labour Party.
- R. Laidlaw - Liberal M.P. for East Renfrewshire 1900-1910.
- Alexander Cross - Liberal M.P. for Camlachie Division of Glasgow.
- F.E. Smith - Unionist M.P. for Walton Division of Liverpool 1908-1918 and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- R. Duncan - Conservative M.P. for Govan District of Lanarkshire.<sup>86</sup>

The Secretary of State for the Colonies quickly came to the defence of the Nyasaland Government's decision that "The Governor was justified in the action which he took".<sup>87</sup> The matter was again raised in the House of Commons Question Time on the 1st and 8th September 1909. And on both occasions Henry Watt, Member of Parliament for the College Division of Glasgow, supported by Hardie and Smith asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies to tell the House the circumstances that led to the charges placed against Kamwana and if there "were any witnesses called in support of that charge; and, if not, on what grounds was he committed to prison until 4 May".<sup>88</sup> Indeed lobbyists had expressed concern at the way Kamwana's case had been handled and pressed that if the Government had any facts, the only way

was for Kamwana to be "brought back to his native land to undergo trial for any charge which may be brought against him".<sup>89</sup> However, in response to Watt's question, the Secretary of State for the Colonies read to the House of Commons a prepared statement in which he said:

The attention of the Secretary of State was called to this matter in June last. The charge against Elliot Kamwana was that his preaching was such a wild and extravagant character that it was likely to produce serious native complications; this was substantiated by sworn native and European evidence. It was not necessary to call any witnesses at the Governor's inquiry, since Kamwana admitted to the Governor that his teaching was of the nature which had been reported.<sup>90</sup>

The whole discussion regarding Kamwana's case was stopped when John Rees, a liberal imperialist and also Chairman for British Central Africa Company stated in Parliament on 8 September 1909 that since "the present Administration is highly appreciated by those who are interested in the good government of the Protectorate, the Secretary of State will consider the advisability of abstaining from any interference on behalf of the missionary Kamwana".<sup>91</sup>

Meanwhile, back in South Africa Booth was facing a different crisis. Russell, the Watch Tower leader, withdrew his financial support for him and went ahead and replaced him with W.W. Johnston. Evidently Booth and Kamwana also parted company, and in 1910 the latter attempted to re-enter Nyasaland, but was refused permission, despite the fact that the number of his followers had dwindled significantly. However, the lobby Booth initiated in Britain may have influenced Sharpe "to allow Kamwana to settle at Chinde until such time as the date for the millennium had passed".<sup>92</sup> It was at this place that M.Z. Ntlonga, Booth's agent, found Kamwana detained. He wrote, "Elliot Kamwana is here ... He has five students always around him ..." and also added, "Pastor Hanson Tandu also is here".<sup>93</sup> The

detention of Kamwana at the British Concession was confirmed by Moore and Wilcox:

While at Chinde we called upon Elliot Kamwana, who at one time was a student with Mr Booth and was sent by him into Nyasaland to preach the views of Pastor Russell (commonly known in Nyasaland as the 'Watch Tower doctrines'). At the time of our visit Kamwana was living with his brother in a native village just outside the British Concession. He is a pastor of a Watch Tower church there, and is detained at Chinde by the British authorities until the close of the year 1914.<sup>94</sup>

The Colonial Administration continued to perceive Kamwana as a great threat in the Protectorate. However, he was allowed to return to his home district in September 1914, but the enthusiasm shown by converts still loyal to him eventually led to his re-arrest. He was "politically detained at Mlanje under the Order made in 1909".<sup>95</sup> Although Johnston tried to attract Kamwana's converts to his side, the majority maintained their allegiance to the latter and acknowledged him as its founder and prophet. During World War I it was understood that there was "a widespread quasi-religious excitement arising out of the doctrines of bodies such as the Watch Tower Society and others which represent the present war as heralding the end of the world or at any rate the dissolution of existing Government".<sup>96</sup> An assessment of the expansion of the movement and teachings by 1915 was reported as follows:

There are about 51 churches in the West Nyasa District, and native pastors have spread the Society's teachings in the North Nyasa, Upper Shire, West Shire, Blantyre, Mlanji and Lower Shire Districts, and attempted to do so in the South Nyasa District ...

Speedy approach of the 2nd Advent and the destruction of all forms of government. The end Advent was to take place in October 1914 (Russelite prophecy which has now postponed to 1923), later postponed by Kamwana to between April and October 1915. All present forms of government are beastly. Vilification of Roman Church and British rule (6 Watch Tower pastors convicted at Ncheu of sedition in 1915); hostility to European controlled Missions and denouncement of their doctrines".<sup>97</sup>

And a compiled report produced by the African Watch Tower pastors in Blantyre and the Upper Shire Districts in August, 1914 submitted the following report:

Locality of Headquarters	No. of Meetings held	No. Present <sup>98</sup>
Limbe	43	1,884
Linjisi	31	584
NCheu and District	58	2,007

TOTAL	132	4,475
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By 1924, the Nyasaland Government had estimated a figure of "3,000 or 4,000 professed adherents throughout the Protectorate".<sup>99</sup> Kamwana's presence in the country, although under detention, served still as an influential force for the Watch Tower adherents and their movement. But following Chilembwe's revolt in 1915 Kamwana's activities came even more under scrutiny. In 1916 he, together with two other political detainees, Chirwa and Mwenda, was charged with "carrying on secret correspondence of seditious character and contrary to the rules and restrictions imposed on politically detained persons".<sup>100</sup> G. Smith, the Governor of the Protectorate, informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

After careful consideration of the matter with the Executive Council I have decided that it is desirable that all three should be deported from the Protectorate under the provisions of Sections 25 to 27 of the British Central Africa Order in Council, 1902, and I am in correspondence with the Governor of Mauritius with a view to their reception in that Colony.<sup>101</sup>

Bonar Law, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, confirmed and approved the decision taken by the Governor. Kamwana and two fellow detainees "left Chinde for

Mauritius under escort on the 6th of December 1916".<sup>102</sup> And it was further "ordered that these men be detained at Flat Island pending an opportunity for their removal to Rodrigues, where they will be interned at the expense of the Government of Nyasaland".<sup>103</sup> However, in 1919 the Governor of Mauritius refused to continue detaining Kamwana and his fellow detainees, on the grounds that the "past detention covered by emergency war legislation was now lapsing".<sup>104</sup> The Nyasaland Government seemed somehow reluctant to have the political detainees returned to their home country. And further arrangements were therefore made to transfer them to the Seychells Islands where they arrived on 10 October 1919. Lt. Col. Eustace Fiennes, the Governor told the Secretary of State for Colonies in his despatch:

They are detained at Anse Royale and are under supervision of the justice of the Peace, South Mahe. I personally visited them and they are quite contented with their accommodation which composes of a separate hut for each family and they also given available ground for garden work.<sup>105</sup>

The Watch Tower movement in Nyasaland continued to thrive long after Kamwana's exile to Mauritius and then later to the Seychelles. On 4th June 1918, the Lilongwe District Native court, before Magistrate G. Bainbridge-Ritchie, charged on Political Removal and Detention of Natives Ordinance Rex V. Joshua Chateka and Jackson Banda for allegedly "teaching and baptising people on their own account".<sup>106</sup> When enquiries were first carried out, it was found that "they did not belong to any of the recognised Missions, and were followers of one Elliot Kamwana".<sup>107</sup> Chateka admitted being in possession of The Divine Plan of the Ages or Millennial Dawn and The time is at hand, published by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn N.Y. During the Court hearing, Chateka was further interrogated:

Court:           Have you been ordained?

Joshua: Yes by Harrison Gunda of the Dedza District, and he was ordained by Yohani of Domwe, Dedza District, Yohani was ordained by Elliot Kamwana. I have nothing further to say.

Court: You knew that this teaching was prohibited by Mr Ockenden?

Joshua: Yes, but I felt it my duty to do what my conscience told me to do.<sup>108</sup>

Banda, who was described as Chateka's accomplice, also testified to the Court that he had been ordained by Harrison Gunda in Salisbury, Rhodesia. And that it was after their return to Nyasaland at the end of 1917 that he began to preach and baptize. Both Chateka and Banda were found guilty of the charge that they conducted themselves "so as to be dangerous to peace order and good Government in the Protectorate".<sup>109</sup> The Resident detained them pending the final verdict of the Governor. Cases similar to this continued to emerge in several parts of the country.

For instance:

On 30th December, 1918, Hector Duff the Acting Governor of Nyasaland, under section 4(2) of the Political Removal and Detention of Natives Ordinance, 1909, issued yet again this time warrants for the removal of three natives, named Peter, Nathaniel and Wilson from the Dowa District and for their detention at Chiromo, Liwonde, and Fort Johnston respectively. The charge - they were found preaching and baptising.<sup>110</sup>

The second defendant, Dandi, told the magistrate, W. Kirby Green, that his main influence was Yohani, who at the time was "teaching and baptising people at a place near Limbe".<sup>111</sup> Evidently Yohani told him "that the Lord was coming and that the end of the world would soon come. Yohani baptized me and told me that he had been taught by Kamwana".<sup>112</sup> Nathaniel also testified regarding Yohane, Kamwana's protege:

I met him in 1916 when I was going to Blantyre to get some loads for Mvera Mission. I was washing at Kapeni stream on the Matope Road when Yohane came and begun to talk to me. He told me that the end of the world was soon coming and that the Lord would soon come. I listened to him and he baptized me and told me to go and teach. On my return I went to Salisbury and there met Wilson. While I was at Salisbury with my brother Peter, Harrison Gundwa of Dedza taught us. He told us the same things that Yohane had taught.<sup>113</sup>

The third defendant, Wilson, was told by Rev. J.A. Retief, a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, to notify the Government if he desired to operate a school, but refused, saying "He didn't think he would be permitted" adding, "he did not intend going to the Boma, and that he was not afraid of the Government and that he would continue to teach what he liked."<sup>114</sup> It must be noted that chiefs in general, including their village headmen, collaborated with the colonial government to track down Kamwana's Watch Tower evangelists.<sup>115</sup> During the First World War all labour migration from Nyasaland to other neighbouring countries of Central and Southern Africa was either discouraged or prohibited. But when the War had ended, Coleman asserts that "there was an immediate and large-scale exodus of workers from the country. The focus of this exodus was Rhodesia rather than South Africa".<sup>116</sup> Hence it is to Southern Rhodesia that we now follow the Watch Tower activities of Kamwana's converts.

### SOUTHERN RHODESIA

The origin of the Watch Tower movement in Rhodesia is mostly attributed to labour migration from Nyasaland. Ranger's article "The Early History of Independence in Southern Rhodesia" states, "From its first reported incidence in Southern Rhodesia in 1917 until the sudden extension of activity in the Shona

reserves in the late 1920s, Watch Tower was fundamentally the faith of a Nyasa elite of clerks and semi-skilled labourers".<sup>117</sup> It must be noted, however, that the Watch Tower doctrines may have been introduced much earlier, possibly as early as 1909 after Kamwana had initially done so in Nyasaland. It is important to point out that Sharpe by 1909 made the following remarks, particularly concerning the Tongas:

The Atonga are practically all professing Christians and are a people of much enterprise. They travel in considerable numbers to South Africa, some to the Transvaal but mostly to Southern Rhodesia, where they undertake work at comparatively high pay. Most of them can read and write and have no difficulty in finding posts as clerks, interpreters, overseers, cooks, house servants and so forth. Practically none do manual labour in the mines as they have sufficient education and acumen to obtain easier work at higher pay.<sup>118</sup>

The absence of industrialization in Nyasaland seems to have been the main reason that led many Watch Tower followers to migrate to neighbouring territories, particularly to Southern Rhodesia.

The prohibition on recruiting for the South African mines in 1907, and for the Rhodesian mines in 1909, had little effect on the overall level of international migration from Malawi...

At the end of the war, however, there was an immediate and large-scale exodus of workers from the country. The focus of this exodus was Rhodesia rather than South Africa".<sup>119</sup>

In 1923 a statistical analysis of membership in the mines along the Salisbury-Bulawayo road revealed "that only two of 173 members were Shona; the rest were Nyasas".<sup>120</sup> The leader of the Watch Tower movement at Shanva mine was a Nyasa named Richard Kalinde, an overseer of grain store and kitchen. He was described as "thoroughly honest and reliable ... He reads a great deal, mostly books from America on the Life of Christ and religious matters".<sup>121</sup> The Watch Tower thrived first among the "mixed mining natives, but suddenly it spread out from the towns and the mines into the Shona country-side to become in certain areas something like a

contagious mass movement".<sup>122</sup> Ranger states:

In 1926 the movement spread through the whole Lomangundi district, into Urungwe and Sipolila as well as Sinoia. By 1929 it was supported by thousands of people in the Zezuru and Kore-Kore Reserves.<sup>123</sup>

It was known that "Though suddenly taken up by the Shona the movement was carried still by Nyasa preachers, especially by domestic servants".<sup>124</sup> It was observed in 1929 that there was considerable activity on the part of certain "non-indigenous natives in spreading the doctrines of the sect".<sup>125</sup> The report further added, "They have gained a number of adherents among the local native population some of whom assist by holding meetings and baptising the indigenous population".<sup>126</sup> Indeed there were reports, although considered as less reliable, that John Chilembwe and Elliot Kamwana "occupy a great place in all their beliefs".<sup>127</sup> The Watch Tower movement in Southern Rhodesia continued to expand in spite of the mass deportations and imprisonments that followed. Ranger writes:

Where as the Ndebele had for long been working in alliance with the Ethiopian movement and with modern political associations for the restoration of the monarchy and land rights, the Shona at long last expressed their opposition and frustration through Watch Tower. In 1929 an African opponent of Watch Tower lamented that the Shona were being swayed by the Nyasa preachers with their talk of resistance to whites.<sup>128</sup>

And he complained that, "the Maswina listen too easily".<sup>129</sup>

### NORTHERN RHODESIA

The Watch Tower presence was first noticed in 1917 following the purging deportations of its adherents from Southern Rhodesia. A visiting Commissioner, H.C. Marshall, reported:

some five or six men of the Tanganyika Magisterial District returned from Southern Rhodesia, several of these are of the Wiwa Tribe and were formerly teachers in or closely connected with the Scotch Mission

at Mwenzo near Fife Administration Station. It is understood that whilst in Southern Rhodesia these men came in contact with leaders of the Watch Tower sect and imbibed their teachings.<sup>130</sup>

Meebelo identified these men as Hanoc Sindano, Posa, Simuchimba, Leviticus Kanchele, Yapangwa and Makomba.<sup>131</sup> He attributes their Watch Tower influence as originating from:

the Watch Tower movement, which under the fiery leadership of Elliot Kamwana had by 1915 gained considerable ground in Nyasaland, and through Nyasa Migrant workers, had also filtered into Southern Rhodesia.<sup>132</sup>

While on their way from Southern Rhodesia, these men passed through North-East Rhodesia. When they reached their homes, they then began to spread the Watch Tower beliefs and recruiting new converts. However, the main breakthrough of their crusade came when some of the leaders and adherents were prosecuted in September 1918. The movement spread rapidly from Fife Sub-District to the bordering Chinsali Sub-District in the South.

At the end of 1918 two of the chief tenets of this religion were (1) the end of the world was imminent and that there would be a new chieftainship under God, (2) Converts should maintain an attitude of passive resistance to all orders from Chiefs or Europeans. It was the attempt inherent in these doctrines to subvert all authority which necessitated Government Action.<sup>133</sup>

Its activities became even "more pronounced about the time of Von Lettow's entry into the territory through Fife Station".<sup>134</sup> "Towards the end of the year it was estimated that over 1,000 natives had joined the Watch Tower ranks".<sup>135</sup> By the end of January, 1919, a large number of men were arrested in the Fife Sub-District and subsequently tried on various charges by Justice Macdonell in the High Court sitting at Kachama. The beliefs and sayings of the Watch Tower movement were said to be as follows:

The end of the world and the present system of Government is quite near, therefore,

NO NEED to obey Chiefs, Headmen or Government representatives,

NO NEED to cultivate or give attention to live-stock,

NO NEED to work for Headmen or Europeans. Be baptized and ready for the new Government;

Chiefs and 'no-converts' are devils (connected with Satan);

Discard a wife, if an unbeliever;

Throw over all wives but one;

Watch and Pray (Converts lived in the open or in open sheds and shouted loudly by night)".<sup>136</sup>

No probationary period was required for their catechumens as was by the established Church Missions. "It would appear that a mere wish was sufficient to ensure baptism and enrolment".<sup>137</sup> And hence it was believed that the "readiness to immerse 'converts' explains to a large extent the success and rapid spread of the Watch Tower movement, coupled with the fact that some of the reputed tenets were very acceptable to the common people".<sup>139</sup> However, Pueth, Superior of the White Fathers Mission at Kayambi, wrote in February 1920 that the burden of the Watch Tower Society was mainly seen in their anti-government attitude; as observed here:

There they are, they who over burden us with loads, and beat us like slaves, but a day will come when they will be slaves. All they have was given to them that they might give us. If they do not give us all they have are unjust towards us.<sup>140</sup>

The Commissioner also noted that the Watch Tower adherents felt "God sent Europeans to Africa to give them free gifts but instead of doing this Europeans make the natives work for them thereby getting wealth and they do not teach them anything

about God. They are deceivers".<sup>141</sup> Stokes, who replaced Goodall as an Assistant Magistrate in the Fife Sub-District, remarked:

There are a number of semi-educated natives in the district, who have travelled in South Africa and elsewhere, who are dissatisfied with the present conditions and who consider that they get an insufficient return for the, to them heavy taxation. This state to incline to any doctrine - apart from Watch Tower - whereby they think they can better themselves.<sup>142</sup>

It is interesting to note that when the Watch Tower members traced the history of their movement in Northern Rhodesia, Kamwana figured a great deal, as the following account shows:

The first people to have the blessing were the Jews. They lost it in 606BC. Then the Europeans had the mission to preach for 2,520 years till 1914. In 1874 Watch Tower was started by Russell; Elliot Kamwana learned from an American (see p.24, probably a reference to Booth). He was a Tonga from Nyasaland, and God made him a prophet. He prophesied that a war would break out among the Europeans, and that was what happened in 1914. Wasn't he a prophet? Elliot was put in jail by the government for twenty-eight years, 1909-1938.<sup>143</sup>

Although Booth cannot be seen as the direct founder of the Watch Tower Movement in Central and South Africa, his role in its foundation is not without significance. The men who took central stage in the development of the movement were a number of his protégés, particularly Elliot Kamwana.

At the very beginning it was Booth who introduced the basic ideas of the movement and gave many Africans the confidence to assert themselves and take initiatives in terms of religious teaching in South and Central Africa.

It is clear that his combination of Seventh Day Sabbath teaching with millennialist teaching was always his own, and it appears that the Watch Tower type millennialism soon disappeared from his preaching. Yet it was through men directly

influenced and inspired by him that a particular African version of Watch Tower teaching spread in what were Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia.

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**CHAPTER VI****BOOTH AND AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN DOCTRINE:****- A PRECURSOR FOR MODERN BLACK THEOLOGY?**

This chapter is intended to trace and assess Booth's 'Africa for the African' ideology and seeks to show its relationship to the modern Black theology of Liberation. It has been observed and perhaps rightly so that "although the term is new, Black Theology as such is not".<sup>1</sup> And hence we shall argue that its ideas stem from the doctrine of 'Africa for the African'. It was early asserted that Booth was "the first to preach the doctrine of Africa for the African".<sup>2</sup> The South African nationalist, J.L. Dube, also seems to confirm this notion when he says, "The first man who wanted to preach Ethiopianism was an Englishman named Booth".<sup>3</sup> The modern British commentator on African affairs, Colin Legum argues that the political life of 'Africa for the African' first began 'not in America but in Nyasaland and South Africa'.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that Dibinga Wa Said associates the term 'Ethiopianism' with 'Africa for the African' theme. He asserts that "Ethiopianist theology is derived from the biblical Psalm 68:31 ... The slogan of Ethiopianism was and still is Africa for the Africans".<sup>5</sup> This aspect will be dealt with in more detail later in the chapter.

**THE AFRICAN CHRISTIAN UNION AND THE ORIGINS OF  
AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN IDEOLOGY IN BOOTH'S THOUGHT**

The theme of 'Africa for the African' seems to have first emerged when Booth attempted to launch the African Christian Union organization. Langworthy suggests that the ideology originated "out of Booth's prophetic vision for Africa, his experiences, his launching of the (AMTC), and of course his evolving conception of African independency".<sup>6</sup> Booth published a prospectus in Durban, South Africa, on 10th September 1896 which detailed 21 aims and objects of 'the African Christian Union' stated as follows:

- I. To unite together Christians of the African race, and various denominations, in the name of Jesus Christ to solemnly work towards and pray for the day when the African people shall become an African Christian Nation.
- II. To provide capital to equip and develop Industrial Missions Stations, worked by competent Native Christians, or others of the African race; such Stations to be placed on a self-supporting and self-propagating basis.
- III. To steadily demand by Christian and lawful methods the equal recognition of the African and allied peoples to the rights and privileges accorded to Europeans.
- IV. To call upon every man, woman, and child of the African race, as far as may be possible, to take part in the Redemption of Africa during this generation by gift, loan or personal service.
- V. To specially call upon the Afric-American Christians, and those of the West Indies, to join hearts and hands in this work, either by coming in person to take part or by generous, systematic and continuous contributions.
- VI. To solicit funds in Great Britain, America, and Australia, for the purpose of restoring carefully selected Christian

Negro families, or adults, back to their fatherland in furtherance of the objects of the Union.

- VII. To educate and teach specially selected Native Christians the present day opportunities open to the African race and to send forth such to advocate the Society's interests, objects and methods.
- VIII. To firmly, judiciously and repeatedly place on record by voice and pen the great wrongs inflicted upon the African in the past and in the present by the people of Europe and America, and to urge upon Christians who wish to be clear of African blood in the day of God's judgement, to make restitution for the wrongs of the past, and for the appropriation by force of the African's land in the present.
- IX. To retard the progress of aggression, as far as may be, by purchasing blocks of well chosen land in different parts of Africa, in order to form Mission Centres, and Natives Christians Townships.
- X. To initiate and develop the culture of tea, coffee, cotton, cocoa, sugar &c., &c., and to establish profitable mining or other industries or manufactures.
- XI. To establish such transport agencies by land, river, or ocean, as shall give the African free access to the different parts of his great country and people, and to the general commerce of the world.
- XII. To engage European skilled labourers as servants, to train and teach African learners any department by commercial, engineering, nautical, medical, or professional knowledge, if found necessary.
- XIII. To mould and guide the labour of Africa's millions into channels that shall develop the vast God-given wealth of Africa for the uplifting and commonwealth of the people, rather than for the aggrandizement of a few already rich Europeans.
- XIV. To promote the formation of companies on a Christian basis devoted to special aspects of the work, whose liability shall be limited, whose shares shall not be

transferable without the Society's consent, whose shareholders shall receive a moderate rate of interest only, and whose profits shall permanently become the property of the African Christian Union for the pursuance of the herein defined objects.

- XV. To petition the Government of the United States of America to make a grant of £100, per adult, to each Afric-American desiring to be restored to African soil, as some recompenses for the 250 years of unpaid slave labour, and the violent abduction of millions of Africans from their fatherland.
- XVI. To petition the British and other European Governments occupying portions of Africa, to make substantial and free grants of land to expatriated Africans electing to return and settle in their native country, such grants to be inalienable from the African race.
- XVII. To petition the British and other European Governments, holding African territory, to make adequate inalienable native reserve lands, such reserves to be convenient to the locality of the different tribes.
- XVIII. To provide for all representatives, officials, or agents, of the Union and its auxiliary departments, modest and comfortable maintenance together with due provision for periods of sickness, incapacity, widowhood, or orphanage.
- XIX. To submit the accounts and transactions of the Society to the fullest scrutiny, and to publish periodical accounts certified by competent auditors.
- XX. To vest all funds, properties, products, or other sources of income in the hands of Trustees, to be held in perpetuity for the objects set forth in the 21 Clauses herein contained.
- XXI. Finally to pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN and look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the AFRICAN CHRISTIAN NATION by Gods power and in His own time and way.<sup>7</sup>

It is significant to note that these objectives and goals were intended among other reasons, to create awareness among Europeans in general but more also to inspire and revive hope to Africans as regards to their spiritual, social, economic and political destiny. First we examine the theological relevance Booth attaches to the idea of the African Christian Union. He cites Isaiah 58:1 to underpin the urgency of its message and mission. The text reads "Cry aloud, spare not ... Warn my people of their transgressions". Young's comment on this verse asserts "Here then is no whispering, no mere conversational tone, but a crying aloud with the full voice, that the hypocrisy of the people might clearly be revealed. To make the thought perfectly clear"<sup>8</sup> Excell also interprets, "The loudness of the call is intended to suggest the importance of the subject, and, perhaps, the insensibility of those to be convinced"<sup>9</sup> and then goes on to assert that the person who is called:

must be vehement and in good earnest, must cry aloud, and not spare. Not spare them, nor touch them with his proofs as if he were afraid of hurting them, but search the wound to the bottom, lay it bare to the bone; not spare himself, or his own pains, but cry as loud as he can. Though he spend his strength, and waste his spirits, though he get their ill-will by it, and get himself into an ill-name; yet he must not spare<sup>9</sup>

This seems to be the spirit and conviction which possibly impelled Booth to call for radical reforms to be made and also for Africans themselves to unite and do their part. He stated "Let the call be loud and long and clear to every one with African blood coursing through his veins **THIS DAY TO DO HIS DUTY**".<sup>10</sup> It is important to add that Booth envisioned an ultimate goal in view to his 'Africa for the African' scheme. And hence the inclusion of Isaiah 60:22, "A little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it."<sup>11</sup> Shepperson

states that the text "sounded the authentic note of religio-radical nationalism that disturbed many whites".<sup>12</sup> It is quite clear that Booth's constant use of this text shows it to be the foundation of his theology of Liberation. Achtemeier interprets that (Isaiah 60:22) shows that "The few, the poor, the oppressed will become the many and powerful".<sup>13</sup> Such notions may have been in Booth's mind constantly. And hence he appealed to his readers to give "a large-hearted and patient consideration"<sup>14</sup> to his 'Africa for the African' manifesto. He believed most Christian Missions stressed the spiritual aspect but noted with concern that as he saw it they were "not adapted, as yet to give the African Native the full place to which he is entitled commercially or socially".<sup>15</sup> And hence 'The African Christian Union' organization was being set "to supply this very visible need".<sup>16</sup> Booth was dedicated to total the liberation of Africans. He argued that in his opinion "very great opportunities exist at the present time for the people of Africa, if they can be awakened from their apathy and brought to see them", and added, "Let them have faith in God and go forward to possess in Christ's name and by Christian methods the land of their forefathers".<sup>17</sup> Booth's criticism was not only directed at missionaries but went on to include also colonists, white settlers and planters whose role so often inhibited the Africans in participating fully in matters that pertained to commercial enterprise. Booth noted:

There is no one thing the gold loving, God-dishonouring class of Europeans so much detests as the unlocking of commercial secrets and knowledge in favour of the African Native. Yet this must be done, for the Gospel of goodwill to men demands it, just as clearly as the command THOU SHALT NOT COVET condemn the European land usurper.<sup>18</sup>

Booth then substantiated his argument by drawing attention to an extract from the

'Natal Advertiser' published on 5th September 1896 as an example in which the writer stated:

My experience of Natives convinces me that they are a bad lot. They must be kept down with a strong hand. Attempts to Christianize them have all proved worse than useless. The school Kaffir invariably turns out a blackguard. Our legislature ought to re-assert the right of every white man to 'wallop' his own nigger. I would not now give a single penny to the cause of Missions ... No good preaching the gospel to those creatures. I hardly think they can have souls. At any rate, if they have, they are not worth saving.<sup>19</sup>

Statements such as these only served to strengthen Booth's resolve to pursue even harder his policy of 'Africa for the African'. He argued "Let the African be his own employer, develop his own country; establish his own manufactures; run his own ships; work his own mines, and conserve the wealth from his labour and his God-given land for the uplifting of the people and the glory of God".<sup>20</sup> Booth wasted no time to appeal to Africans: "Let no tribal or denomination barrier prevail, but unite for CHRIST AND AFRICA".<sup>21</sup> And felt also that it may be "God's order that Africa, which has long been 'last' shall yet be among the 'first'".<sup>22</sup> Booth's appeal went on to call for the need to "put aside the curse of individual aggrandizement, and labour for the commonwealth and enlightenment of all".<sup>23</sup> His clarion call was:

Cast unbelief and hesitation to the winds: shake off the sloth of centuries, then shall the words of the prophet be fulfilled for the African race - 'ARISE, SHINE, FOR THY LIGHT IS COME'. Let the Christian people begin at once to unite, choose their treasurer and officers, appoint scrutineers to see that the funds are carefully applied to the objects specified. There is no time to be lost. Let the doubters and half hearted stand aside till they have found a better way. If they cannot help, let them not block the way for those who are willing. There will be sufficient to stand against in the European opposition without opposed by part of the people the effort designs to help.<sup>24</sup>

It is worth mentioning that Booth's scheme was not to be dominated by men only. He called upon women and girls to "take part and form a Women's League as an auxiliary effort".<sup>25</sup> And along with the plan of systematic giving of "1d. per day or 2s 6d. per month"<sup>26</sup> by Africans themselves, Booth devised four main basic areas as necessary for commercial enterprise. He outlined them as follows:

- I. The purchase of the land, two dwelling houses and large labour sheds, the present headquarters of the Union situated in Hospital Road, Durban, South Africa. This is now leased with power to purchase.
- II. To purchase the present transport service and boats now being worked between Chinde, Zambezi and Blantyre, in the interior.
- III. To purchase the late Buchanan Bros. valuable coffee plantations in Nyasaland consisting of 150,000 acres, or thereabout of specially selected land suitable for the growth of coffee, tea, sugar or tobacco.
- IV. To purchase a coastal steamer, similar to the S.S. Induna, to carry cargo and passengers from Natal and East African ports.<sup>27</sup>

Booth hoped the purchase especially of the steamer would put the Africans on a different footing in commercial terms and thus mark the beginning of an "AFRIC-AMERICAN LINE of ocean touching at some port in the South of England, and so entering into lucrative trade between England and South Africa, as well as America".<sup>28</sup> Another interesting observation was the team Booth enlisted to man the project. Apart from Booth himself, the entire personnel comprised of black people from South Africa, Nyasaland and United States of America.<sup>29</sup> The initial reaction to Booth's scheme was both negative and hostile. The Diamond Fields Advertiser editorial claimed, "Plainly, the idea underlying the project is to place the Native in a position of dominance over the white man in Africa".<sup>30</sup> Much of the fear seems to

have been caused by the prospect that "Mr Booth's idea was to induce all of African extraction the world over to unite in the organization of a semi-benevolent stock company for the commercial occupation of Africa. Commercial power", they envisaged, "would eventually mean political, control also."<sup>31</sup> Although in certain white circles the scheme was played down and only viewed as "an odd mixture of Scriptural and Stock Exchange language", yet some took Booth's venture seriously and feared for its possible successful result. They argued:

For it is plain that if such a swindle could be successfully worked the returns would be stupendously great. Consider the ease with which the thing could be done - assuming this random shot hit the mark. In South Africa alone there are millions of Natives, and, once persuade them that this astounding scheme is capable of being carried into effect, and there are not very many of them who would decline to contribute to the funds.<sup>32</sup>

To support their view, they compared the South African blacks to the Irish "We know how freely Irish-American labourers and servant girls allow gentry of the Tynan breed to rob them in the cause of Ireland"<sup>33</sup>, and yet they add "those victims are sensible and cautious by the side of the millions of ignorant, intensely superstitious, almost inconceivably credulous Natives of South Africa".<sup>34</sup> And hence they felt the government should intervene and "no effort should be spared, by missionaries newspapers and public men"<sup>35</sup> to thwart and bring to a halt Booth's drive for the African cause. Similar sentiments were expressed in religious newspaper editorials who viewed 'The African Christian Union' manifesto has "certainly the most astounding proposal that has ever been put into type for the elevation of the African race".<sup>36</sup> It was further argued that the scheme was full of flaws because it severed "the black man from the white, thus undoing away with the benefits the black man

has received from contact with the European".<sup>37</sup> It was hoped the whole project as it stood would "be repudiated by all sensible Natives, and by all missionaries and others who wish well to the African race".<sup>38</sup> In all, Booth's scheme received enthusiastic support in some African circles, at least at first, but met bitter opposition mainly from European quarters. Roux affirms also that "The new movement met with violent opposition from the European press".<sup>39</sup> It is suggested, however, that a major blow inflicted on 'The African Christian Union' scheme and its proposals came not so much from the Europeans but from a black South African, John Tengu Jabavu. He successfully used his newspaper to swing black support against it. There is no doubt that Jabavu was a popular African politician of his day and may be considered as having contributed much to the welfare of his people. However, there are also instances where because of his pro-white liberal views, he is seen by Africans to have played a role that hampered the nationalist cause, especially in South Africa. This is seen when he started to publish a weekly African paper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* [Black Opinion] in King Williams Town "with the financial assistance of some white liberal politicians who relied on African votes in the Cape Colony."<sup>40</sup> It is noted:

In 1884 Jabavu had formed the Native Electoral Association with which he sought to mobilise the minority African vote behind his financiers. When he rejected African opinion to stand as candidate in the 1884 elections, he was seen by some African leaders as an over zealous supporter of white liberals whom he trusted would represent African interest in Parliament. Some even charged that Jabavu was not proponent of full citizenship rights for Africans outside the Cape Colony, arguing that his primary interest was in the campaign to retain the Cape African vote.<sup>41</sup>

This assessment seems to be confirmed by Solomon Plaatje, who added his observation regarding Jabavu and his newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* Newspaper:

Mr. Tengo - Jabavu's paper began to sink into difficulties and had to cast about for a financial rescuer. Prominent supporters of the present Ministry came to rescue; three out of the ten members of the first Union Cabinet became shareholders in the sinking *Imvo*, so that the editor, in a sense, cannot very well be blamed because his paper is native only in language. However, we do not think that he does full justice to his ministerial employers.

God forbid that we should ever find that our mind had become the property of some one other than ourselves; but should such a misfortune ever overtake us, we should at least strive to serve our new proprietor diligently, and whenever our people are unanimously opposed to a policy, we should consider it part of our duty to tell him so; but that is not Mr Jabavu's way of serving a master. Throughout the course of a general election, we have known him to feed his masters (the S.A. party), upon flapdoodle, fabricating the mess out of imaginary native votes of confidence for his master's delectation."<sup>42</sup>

Just as the white critics attacked Booth's 'Africa for the African' scheme, so Roux notes "Jabavu's *Imvo* was not backward in joining in the chorus of denunciation".<sup>42</sup>

And indeed we see that "Imvo Zabantsundu denounced Booth as a dangerous radical".<sup>44</sup> It is probably in this context that we should view partly the failure of Booth's scheme to which Jabavu himself dubbed it as 'mania'. On 29th October, 1896, Jabavu wrote in his editorial entitled 'THE MANIA ONCE MORE' regarding 'The African Christian Union' and its founders that, "All have, doubtless, heard of many movements among the natives, but the new mania is conspicuous for being self-destructive, and lack of common sense on the part of the promoters".<sup>45</sup> He argued that the leaders of the scheme had "coated the surface of their adventure with the name of a Christian Union, for there is absolutely nothing Christian in it ...".<sup>46</sup> He also felt the Union: "preaches separation, with ungratefulness it combines impertinence... A better name than 'The Mania' could not be found for this species of madness ... Like the Luddites of old who formed themselves into band for the

purpose of breaking stocking-frames, and the levellers who were for preaching the impracticable doctrine of Social Equality, these men are determined to put a stop to the 'aggrandizement of a few already rich Europeans'. We need not say that they are miles away from the right course ..."<sup>47</sup> Although Jabavu seemed to dismiss outright the project, he nonetheless conceded that if carried out it would bring about major changes in South Africa. He wrote: "If it can be carried out it would mean nothing short of a revolution in the government of this country".<sup>48</sup> And hence Jabavu mounted a campaign to thwart its being launched. He even accepted for publication in his newspaper articles from European critics such as W.B. Chalmers, an old Colonialist and former public servant, who commended Jabavu in a patronising manner:

In your leading article you have once more struck the right note. Continue therefore, in the strongest terms to warn your countrymen against the scheme contained in that document, and to advise them to have nothing to do with it. Impress upon them to continue to remain quiet, peaceful and loyal subjects of the British Crown, and in no way, either directly or indirectly, to identify themselves with such a dangerous and suicidal scheme, which will only land them in misery and ruin, as did the cattle killing mania of 1887 [sic]. Our Natives have troubles enough to contend with in the shape of droughts and locusts, with every prospect of rinderpest being added without bringing further and greater trouble upon themselves by wilfully destroying the good feeling and the sympathies of the white man towards them.<sup>49</sup>

It is interesting to note that Booth restrained himself from entering into a confrontation with Jabavu, although he was aware of his scathing remarks against the Union scheme. One of the possible reasons for this is that Booth did not want to alienate himself from other Africans whose support he very much needed. It must be said that by then Booth's African Union Scheme had already received the support

from Saul Msane, later "An important early figure in the African National Congress ... and founding member of the Natal Native Congress at the turn of the century".<sup>50</sup> But certainly he did not resist responding to Chalmers' article. Booth first reminded Chalmers that if indeed he was a Christian, he should remember "that the basis of human relationship should be the God- given principle, 'Whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them'.<sup>51</sup> He then went further to ask Chalmers what his reaction would be "If the African had possessed himself of the Englishman's fatherland and if the English man found himself in the despised and humble position the African is expected to be content with".<sup>52</sup> Booth then lashed out:

The ring of Chalmers' letter sounds to me like that of a man with a guilty conscience, and well he and others may be so troubled, until we comply more with the word of God. Our Churches every Sabbath hear us declare,

'Thou shalt not covet'  
'Thou shalt not kill'  
'Thou shalt not steal'

But who dare say we are not doing all three of these? As one English man I ask others in this land to look without fear or favour into what we are doing in Matebeleland: the heartless way to which we hire men to shoot down the owners of the soil. Our land hunger and greed for gold is supposed to justify our actions. I believe the curse of God must ever rest upon workers of iniquity".<sup>53</sup>

Booth's sudden reference to Matebeleland in Rhodesia as an example may in fact be seen as a reminder to others of the Ndebele-Shona rising (Chimurenga) of 1896, which was still fresh in their minds, especially taking into consideration the immense loss of lives left in its wake. However, Jabavu sided with Chalmers and went on to accuse Booth of being one who "deals largely with generalities and theories".<sup>54</sup> Booth claimed he had widely circulated the 'The African Christian Union' prospectus,

having had it "printed in English, Zulu, and the native tongue of Cape Colony; by means of reproduction in the public press and the Native Newspaper 'Jendo' the proposal became well known over a wide area, inclusive of the Dutch speaking states".<sup>55</sup> However, this could not match Jabavu's widely circulated *Imvo Zabantsundu*, under the sponsorship of Liberal politicians. After a consistent denunciation mounted against Booth's scheme, Jabavu was able to write: "We are glad to say that against this kindred movement, the Natives appear to have set their faces like a flint, and are not likely to be disturbed ...".<sup>56</sup> And also confirmed: "We are confident that many of our people who are in Natal will decline to affix their names to this movement, and we warn them against all movements of this kind".<sup>57</sup> But Roux has noted regarding Jabavu's criticism of Union manifesto:

But as to the African Christian Union which Jabavu castigated and stigmatized as mania, and as to their naive manifesto, one may observe that if they were mad, yet there was method in their madness. To ask funds of Europeans in South Africa for the purpose of bringing back those Africans who were living in America may have been fantastic, but there is much in the manifesto that is essential to any sound African Emancipatory movement, and who is to say that African Christians should not unite against the wrongs they suffer?.<sup>58</sup>

Although to a certain extent Booth managed to convert at first several Zulus to his point of view, subsequently at a conference of the African Zulu evangelists at Edendale and another meeting following it, Booth's scheme was rejected. However, Shula Marks prefers the reason that "timidity and moderation (to say nothing of suspicion of Booth) may well have lain behind the rejection of Joseph Booth's schemes by the intellectuals he called together to discuss his proposals for establishing his African Christian Union in 1896".<sup>59</sup> It must be pointed out that

although his proposals seemed a total failure, it is, however, argued that Booth created a Black awareness that had lasting effects. Bridgman states:

Tho this scheme was itself foredoomed, it cannot be doubted that the attendant agitation acted as a powerful stimulus on the schismatic spirit. It was a wind fanning flame. We would not unduly emphasize Mr Booth's propaganda, for restlessness and discontent were already widespread. Nevertheless, previous to this date (1896) there had been in Natal no really serious disaffection. To-day there are some nine independent bodies whose boast is that in religion, at least they are no longer 'under the boot of Europeans.'<sup>60</sup>

Booth returned to British Central Africa, possibly at the end of December, 1896. On 14 January 1897, he introduced the same scheme in Blantyre, Nyasaland with John Chilembwe, Alexander Dickie and Morrison Malinki as signatories. The project may not have advanced beyond paperwork when it quickly came under suspicion. Pachai states that

Other Europeans as well as the government suspected Booth's motives. The former complained that he was drawing away their converts and their labourers; the latter that he was subverting the government by advocating his 'Africa for the African' programme.<sup>61</sup>

He further added:

At Mitsidi he took to coffee cultivation, an enterprise in which he involved African cultivators so that they could better themselves economically. He insisted that Africa should be held in trust for Africans; that Africans should uplift themselves through the formation of a union of African Christians.<sup>62</sup>

J. Bismarck, in a letter to the editor of the Central African Planter, a pro colonial newspaper, stated that although Booth "wants to make us to be equal with Europeans", he felt that his "method will bring us very poor salvation".<sup>63</sup> Boeder, Booth's critic was not slow to seize upon Bismarck's statement in order to draw a link with Jabavu. He felt that "John Tengo Jabavu echoed Bismarck's words calling

Booth, 'a great enemy to our people'.<sup>64</sup> Although one could not but agree that some parts of Booth's plan were over-ambitious, and some of its detailed propositions impractical, at that time its fundamental spirit was important in its attempt to arouse among Africans a powerful consciousness of their own ability and worth. He was deliberately attempting to counteract the attitude of most whites which lowered African self-respect and self-confidence.<sup>65</sup> The very powerful reaction to his schemes among whites is itself proof that he was touching a nerve.

### **BOOTH'S AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN DOCTRINE:**

#### **A FORERUNNER OF MODERN BLACK THEOLOGY?**

John Mbiti, while at pains to distance African theology from Black Theology, describes the latter as "a painful phenomenon in the history of the church".<sup>66</sup> He further writes:

Painful not because of what it says - although it certainly does not deal in soft phrases - but because it has emerged in an American that, since the arrival of the Pilgrims in the seventeenth century, has claimed to be a Christian country.<sup>67</sup>

And hence he argues "Black Theology is a judgement on American Christianity in general. Ideally there would be no reason for Black Theology., It was forced into existence by the particularities of American history".<sup>68</sup> In short therefore, Mbiti views Black Theology as an American phenomenon and applicable to the American situation. In Mbiti's opinion, "The roots of Black Theology must in fact be traced to a much earlier period of American history, the arrival of the first African slaves in the seventeenth century".<sup>69</sup> And then adds "In so far as Black Theology is a response

to this history of humiliation and oppression it is a severe judgement and an embarrassment to Christianity, especially in America".<sup>70</sup> Booth would not have shared Mbiti's view, as we shall later discover. He would have preferred Wilmore and Cone's argument that while in the New World, Black Theology started with the experience of slavery, in Africa it emerged as a result of the plunder of the continent by "the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English".<sup>71</sup> First, we must consider briefly the definition of Black Theology and its possible relationship to 'Africa for the African' doctrine. Elliot Mgojo, a South African exponent of Black Theology, writes: "Black Theology is an attempt by black christians to grasp and think through the central claims of the Christian faith in the light of the black experience".<sup>72</sup> He nonetheless associates Black Theology with Political Theology and argues that the latter also seeks to address "the truth of the Gospel to a grossly neglected area of concern to black people".<sup>73</sup> Boesak is even more explicit in his definition. He states:

Black Theology is a situational theology. It is the black people's attempt to come to terms theologically with their black situation. It seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of blacks will begin to make sense. It seeks to take seriously the biblical emphasis on the wholeness of life ... It is the black struggle towards liberation from religious, economic, psychological and cultural dependency.<sup>74</sup>

And indeed when one compares the aims and goals of both 'Africa for the African' doctrine and those of Black Theology they seem to share similar ideals and work toward the same objective of total liberation. And in relation to Booth, D.D. Phiri endorses Shepperson and Price's assessment that "At the base of this scheme, the African Christian Union, was an appeal to the African to unite and work for his own

redemption - religious, political, economic and spiritual - instead of relying on Europeans".<sup>73</sup> The theme of 'Africa for the African' emerged in Booth's mind in reaction to the European colonization of Africa, particularly the sudden and devastating "Scramble for Africa' of 1875-1895, although he also refers back to the European slave trade of earlier centuries.

Although Booth considered the motto 'Africa for the African' as not new; he viewed it nonetheless as "strange that such a standard should need to be raised".<sup>76</sup> He argued since the term "'Europe for the Europeans' would seem an absurd phrase to formulate, since the Europeans would not tolerate the thought that any other race would be found audacious enough, powerful enough or even unscrupulous enough to dispossess them".<sup>77</sup> Booth noted: "During the past three decades the Africans' progress has doubtless been greatly retarded by the ungenerous and often criminal treatment he has been awarded by his European neighbours".<sup>78</sup> He reckoned that as the European nations "emerged from barbarism and entered upon a period of commercial and territorial enterprise discovering and seizing upon new countries, subduing and often destroying their inhabitants, they ruthlessly set to work some of these countries with slaves plundered from coasts of Africa".<sup>79</sup> And hence in Booth's opinion, such actions "inaugurated one of the most, if not absolutely the most, gigantic and long sustained crimes of modern times".<sup>80</sup> He further noted that the method employed to provide "this accursed demand for slave labor, the coastal African tribes were primed to prey upon the tribes of the interior and thus the hands of the Africans were kept constantly imbrued in each other's blood".<sup>81</sup> Booth went on to cite the British, Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish as "the most prominent in the

nefarious traffic in human flesh. The proposal of the European was thus to appropriate the person and labor of the African".<sup>82</sup> It was his strong view that:

The partition, or plunder of Africa by this concerted agreement, or conspiracy of certain European powers, was conveniently arranged, and the closing decade of the nineteenth century witnesses, the **SECOND MAGNIFICENTLY UNSCRUPULOUS** proposal of the European to harness and exploit his African neighbor. The former clumsy proposal to annex and transplant the Africa's person was costly, cumbersome and infamous; the present proposal to purloin the land under his feet and adroitly to utilise the African as an instrument to disclose, develop and deposit its resources for the European's benefit, is the self-same in spirit, but more ingeniously dressed, further reaching in its effects, and far less likely to be challenged. It is a proposal to deprive 200 million of people of their birthright; to seize upon their property and permanently drain the wealth of Africa and the Africa's labour into European channels.<sup>83</sup>

And indeed Booth argued "As the wonderful resources of his country became known, and the treasures of precious stones, gold and agricultural products were revealed, the desire to possess the property of the African, rather than his person, became manifest. The European scramble for the African's land then began in earnest".<sup>84</sup> He goes on, "The purposes of certain European powers to appropriate large sections of African territory was, however, cleverly glossed over, more or less with philanthropic film".<sup>85</sup> He exposed the double standards and ambiguous morality of the European powers, saying "The slave-raiding which at one time these same powers had industriously fostered, and which the Arab still prosecuted, was now to be extirpated by the wholesale appropriation of territory and subduing of the inhabitants".<sup>86</sup> It was against such background and setting relating to colonialism in Africa and slave trade in earlier centuries that Booth formulated his theme 'Africa for the African'. Shepperson and Price state, "Booth had adopted the slogan when

the European partition of Africa was well advanced, ... Africa for the African becomes, then Booth's own highly personal critique of the African situation in the 1890s."<sup>87</sup> Modern historians seem in a way to agree with Booth's analysis of the Scramble for Africa and its effects. Betts writes: "The popular conclusion has long been that the opening up of Africa in the nineteenth century was done both with great haste and with reckless abandon as European explorers, missionaries, and military men brought European politics, culture, and confusion to a hitherto largely *terra incognita*".<sup>88</sup> Lucas also affirms: "By the end of 1891, in the course of ten years, the partition of Africa among European Powers had in the main been established"<sup>89</sup>

### **BOOTH AND THE INTERPRETATION OF LUKE 10:25-37**

Booth employed the parable of the Good Samaritan as an analogy to argue that Christian Missions had an active role to play in the Decolonization of Africa. It was his long held view that foreign missions to Africa had in the main preached the Gospel merely as liberation from sin but failed to address other issues, such as the colonization of Africa. Booth referred primarily to the British policy of occupation. He asserted:

To the unprejudiced observer and to the educated African, she [Britain] is a marvel of inconsistency, if not criminality, since by her national religion she gratuitously and systematically asserts her belief in the commands

‘Thou shalt not covet’

‘Thou shalt not steal’

## 'Thou shalt not kill'

Yet most effectually, deliberately and continuously she does all three of these in pursuit of her ruthless African annexation policy".<sup>90</sup>

And indeed on the continent of Africa, Booth argued that it didn't matter "whether we look at the government, mining capitalists or the planter class the spirit is the same ...".<sup>91</sup> Booth also expressed grave doubts as regards the attitude of missionaries despatched to African fields by their Christian Churches. He observed: "Her various Christian churches send forth into Africa in good faith their messengers of 'peace on earth and good will toward men', yet these",<sup>92</sup> he argued "often prove to be but the forerunner of another set of men, sent to appropriate, to kill, to tax and subjugate".<sup>93</sup> Booth's observation is best substantiated by Hallowes, who in his article 'Our World-Wide Empire' published in 1894 wrote: "In the providence of our country has become the greatest empire of ancient or modern times".<sup>94</sup> And then goes on to assert:

Whatever may be due to these causes, our world-wide empire has a distinctly religious meaning. Our expansion is directly providential, and links itself with the expansion of another Kingdom, even that Kingdom of Christ, 'which shall never be destroyed'. With all our many faults, we Britons enshrine the purest form of Christianity current in the world. Our churches are mainly Protestant, and the greatness of our empire facilitates the progress of the true Gospel of Christ ... Wherever England has planted colonies, Protestantism has been planted too ... God, who has enlarged our empire, says to English Christians to-day, 'Be ye also enlarged'.<sup>95</sup>

Booth was not slow to take note of such attitudes in Christian missions as acts of aggression and not peace, primarily the association of Christian expansion with colonialism. He observed: "No sooner has the missionary led his convert into freedom and light of God's word than he discerns these things and discovers we are

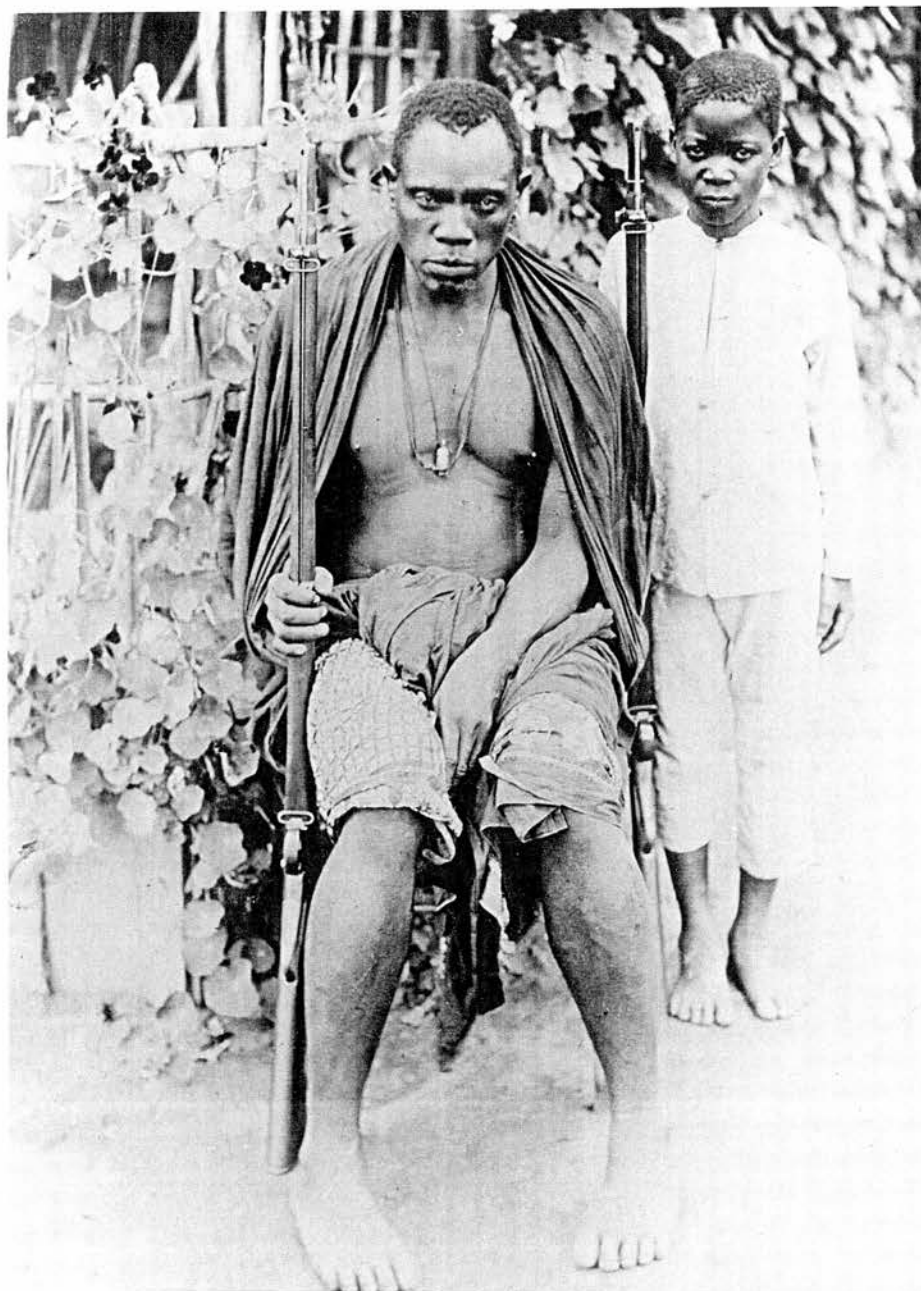


Plate 14. Chief Katunga (Maseya) of the Makololo tribe with consular servant. May have held talks with Booth in the 1890s. (The chief was suspicious of colonists and their intentions).

proclaiming that which condemns ourselves and exposes the wrongs we perpetrate so shamelessly."<sup>96</sup> And hence African converts have naturally asked, "Why, if the missionaries be truly men of God, and not in concert with the wrong-doers, do they not solemnly and sternly denounce the authors of the evil? Are they the victims of the fear of man which 'bringeth a snare?'"<sup>97</sup> Booth revealed that his observations and statements were justified because he had associated with the indigenous people at grassroots level and had noted carefully their grievances. This is shown when he visited Chief Maseya [also known as Katunga] and his people. Speaking through an interpreter, Booth himself heard questions asked that gave the impression certain Africans viewed the planting of missions as paving the way for colonialism. The Chief inquired::

Why did the 'Zinganga' [sic] Livingstone first come? Did the white Queen send him? Who paid him and helped him with goods and money? Did he come with a soft tongue to spy out the land and open the way for men of guns and taxation, to steal the land and make slaves of them? Who sent this smooth tongued man 'Johnsoni'. Why did the White Queen send him? Why did he bring more men with guns? Why were they to make his roads or carry loads and work one month for him for nothing? Were white men preparing to steal all Africa? Did I not think my nation was a nation of robbers? Had we stolen any other countries? Were we going to make them a nation of slaves? What would the end of it all be if they did not fight and stop us? Who found the payment for the journey and paid for my goods? I told him I came with my own money from my own. Did not the Queen send me? What did I come for? What was the difference between Johnsoni and myself? Must I obey him?<sup>98</sup>

In 1902, while attending a European Conference in London, Booth told the audience what his African evangelists had told him regarding their scepticism to distinguish between Christianity and colonialism. He stated that in some villages Africans did not readily accept the message for that very reason:

White men talk into the air and tell you to shut your eyes; they say they are talking to God. That is because the white man knows you are foolish; he knows it is a lie. Listen to him, and you will learn his wisdom and his deceit. He will talk pretty things about the house of God and beautiful land somewhere, and make you think how fine that is; then he will say, Amen. Look at the earth, it is gone. While he has been talking about that other beautiful country, he has stolen the real earth from under your feet.<sup>99</sup>

These observations are reflected by Hayes, who writes that even statesmen and citizens who did not regard Christianity at home "were likely to abet Christian missions abroad as steppingstones or bulwarks to the imperialism of their respective nations".<sup>100</sup> And hence, African nationalists such as Duncan Njilima questioned the purpose or the role of foreign missions:

He said he did not understand the foreign ministers when they were in the pulpit repeating the ten commandments. And he said that they said 'Thou shalt not steal' and 'Thou shalt not covet'. And saying that they have brought in their own government and taken the land from us. And that it was the same as stealing or committing adultery.<sup>101</sup>

Booth strongly felt it was time that missionaries did not shy away from putting the record straight in the wake of such allegations. And in his opinion it was time to work towards a process of Decolonization. Booth argued that a Christian already had a mandate, "All power, all rightful, all final authority is given to Christ, and his servants are his friends in proportion as they do whatsoever he has commanded".<sup>102</sup> In Booth's view, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) underlined the point "He [Christ] commands that our neighbour who has fallen among thieves who have beat him, and stripped him, and left him helpless by the wayside, that his servants shall 'go and do likewise' to the Samaritan ...".<sup>103</sup> He likened the 'priest' and the 'Levite' to the modern missionaries who, he said, represented "the 'pass-by-on-the-

other-side' servants do not come far short in heartlessness and guilt to the spoilers themselves".<sup>104</sup> Booth argued that foreign missionaries who felt they "cannot persuade the rulers of, or the heterogenous mass of thinkers which composes a nation to act righteously even generously; as individuals we can stand out separately and touch not the unclean thing of national plunder and oppression".<sup>105</sup> However, he felt that more could certainly be done. He contended that "Hitherto, our missionary operations have, in the main, been content to preach and declare the good tidings".<sup>106</sup> but noted "Christ's Gospel is one of acts as well as of words. It demands that we shall do and not speak and hear only. Its requirements are simple; searching and definite".<sup>107</sup> It was on this note that he made an impassioned plea to fellow missionaries by asserting, "We must enlarge our missionary methods somewhat if we would do for Africa as we would wish done for ourselves if placed in like circumstances we should wish for the life as well as the life to come".<sup>110</sup> Booth expressed what he felt Africans needed:

We should wish for a brotherly hand to guide and uplift, not to exploit us; we should wish for knowledge how to develop the resources of our land, but not for the enrichment of an already rich and foreign; we should wish to be taught industries, commercial and mining knowledge combined with that of the navigation of our rivers and lakes as well as the ocean skirting our shores: but most of all, we should desire to remain free men, and in the possession of the land of our father.<sup>111</sup>

And Booth added, "It is within the spirit and compass of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, to freely impart these things".<sup>112</sup> He then suggested three methods of correcting past errors in Christian Missions:

1. By the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the Continent of Africa.

2. By the restoration of the land of Africa to African people.
3. By the restoration of the Negroes to the fatherland from which they were stolen, i.e. of such as desire to return.<sup>113</sup>

Booth then included the idea of the Industrial Missions development scheme based on self-supporting and self-propagating, to which we shall now turn for consideration.

### **BOOTH AND THE GODLY-COMMONWEALTH IN AFRICA THROUGH AN 'INDUSTRIAL MISSION' CONCEPT**

Booth believed that one of the major tasks in Africa was, as he saw it, "To mould and guide the labour of Africa's millions into channels that shall develop the vast God-given wealth of Africa for the uplifting and commonwealth of the people, rather than for the aggrandisement of a few already rich Europeans".<sup>112</sup> In his view, the Godly-Commonwealth idea would mean to:

Let the African, sympathetically led by his more experienced Afro-American brother, develop his own country, establish his own manufactures, work his own plantations, run his own ships, work his own mines, educate his own people, possess his own mission stations, conserve the wealth accruing from all sources, if possible, for the commonwealth and enlightenment of the people and the glory of God.

Let Africa, which has so long been 'last' take here rank amongst the first races of the earth by putting aside the curse of individual aggrandisement of labour for the great good of the whole African race, rather than the special enrichment of the favored and selfish few".<sup>113</sup>

One sees that Booth rejected the imposition of the Western system of capitalism on Africans. He derided it as a method that merely encouraged 'individual aggrandizement'. On the contrary, he preferred a socio-economic system of

enterprise based on Christian principles, which he estimated was for 'the great good of the whole African race'. It appears to be designed as a type of Christian socialism. But one asks how he intended to put it into operation. Booth might possibly have responded by referring to his missionary manifestos of 1892, 1896 and 1897 in which he saw the need "to equip and develop Industrial Missions Stations, worked by competent Native Christians, or others of the African race; such Stations to be placed on self-supporting and self-propagating basis".<sup>114</sup> Shepperson asserts, "Booth set out these schemes in more detail bringing together into fascinating mixture elements of Christian and Utopian socialism, proto- Garveyism and liberal capitalism".<sup>115</sup> What was Booth's definition of 'Industrial Mission' as a means by which he would implement or promulgate his socialist ideas among Africans? It is important to point out that the term 'Industrial Mission' had a different meaning in Europe let alone in Africa itself. Lurking, in his thesis, 'The Origins, Context and Ideology of Industrial Mission', argues that in Britain it originated:

back to the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century and other smaller unco-ordinated attempts to provide religious ministrations, at least to railway navvies, can be traced back even to the eighteen-forties. the aims and ideology of the early movements were very different from their modern counterparts, but it is possible to distinguish threads of concern which develop through the succession of movements.<sup>116</sup>

Lurking also observes that as regards the practical aspect, the role of Industrial Missions "tended to collapse into ambiguity and incoherence".<sup>117</sup> However, Mostyn Davies outlined its development in this manner:

Like any other living thing, IM has been forced to evolve as its environment has changed. This process is easy to see in its history. First generation, evangelistic and pastoral industrial ministry, has

Victorian roots which can still be seen in the excellent work of the Missions to Seamen. Second generation, factory based ministry, shaped post war IM by putting chaplains where workers were massed within heavy industry. They learned how individual attitudes and values were moulded by group pressures in management, unions and on the shop floor. They also came to see how ethical questions at factory level had to be understood in relation to the way society is organized economically, socially and politically.<sup>118</sup>

However, Davies makes a pertinent observation worth noting, that "IM ethical stance, which reflected Christian socialism, tended to be unpopular with the middle-class, conservative Christians".<sup>119</sup> This point is amplified by Wickham when he deals with the "historic estrangement of the working class".<sup>120</sup> The term 'Industrial Mission', unlike the way it began in Europe, originated from the idea of 'Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation' that characterised the 19th and early 20th centuries Protestant Missionary enterprise in the Third World countries, particularly Africa. Its can be further traced back to William Carey's 'Enquiry into the Obligation Christians to use means for the conversion of the Heathen' in which he gives the following account:

Scripture likewise seems to point out this method, surely the Isles shall wait for me; the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord, thy God. Isai.lx.9. This seems to imply that in the time of the glorious increase of the church, in the latter days, (of which the whole chapter is undoubtedly a prophecy) commerce shall subserve the spread of the gospel. The ships of Tarshish were trading vessels, which made voyages for traffic to various parts; this must therefore must be meant by it, that navigation, especially that which is commercial shall be one great means of carrying on the work of God and perhaps it may imply that there shall be a very considerable appropriation of wealth to that purpose.<sup>121</sup>

And indeed, such views were later entertained and even promulgated by men such as Buxton, Livingstone, Venn and Wilberforce<sup>122</sup> just to mention a few. Brian Stanley

suggests that, "Christianity was God's appointed engine of civilization; civilising the heathen meant introducing them to clothing and 'industrious habits',<sup>123</sup> but then adds, "Christianity thus brought commerce on its train, and the Christian nation was given tangible reward for its obedience to the missionary imperative".<sup>124</sup> Ogilvie, in his book 'Our Empires Debt to Missions', affirms "that Christian Missions, as a civilising agency have done priceless service to the Child-Races of the Empire is unquestionable ... Prominent in every mission to the Child-Races today is the Industrial Department".<sup>125</sup> It must be pointed out that in the main 'Industrial Habits' entailed brick-making, agricultural training, carpentry, wagon building etc. In most cases Africans were not allowed to be self-reliant or independent from the European supervision. And when the term self supporting and self-propagating was used, it was mostly in the context of the Home Field and its supporters being relieved from the financial burden and thus allow the missionaries to support themselves by using mostly the African labour. In contrast, Booth advocated a system that would enable Africans themselves to be self reliant and thus become independent of European control. Booth's 'Industrial Mission' was seen as rooted in the 'African Clan System'. His diary seems to indicate he had read Dudley Kidd's book 'Kafir Socialism', which states that Africans were "thorough going collectivists. Their very babes are Socialists. The roots of their social policy are to be found in their Clan System".<sup>126</sup> Although Booth may not have accepted all that Kidd had written, yet he noted that African Socialism based on a Clan system which "absolutely prevents the formation of a class of paupers has indeed points in its favour".<sup>127</sup> It is interesting to note that Shepperson describes Booth's African Christian Union he found in 1896 as "a kind

of religious, industrial-co-operative society".<sup>128</sup> It must be pointed out that what Booth envisaged as a model of African Christian socialism must not be confused with Marxist principles.<sup>129</sup> In Booth's view, his 'Industrial Mission' concept based on Christian socialism would eventually lead to a philosophy of African 'Godly-Commonwealth'. Booth to a certain extent was establishing what theologians today, such as Kalilombe, seem to suggest. "The basic point is evidently the urgency for the churches in the missions to throw away the crippling ties of dependence on overseas aid and the need for them seriously to adopt ways and means of becoming self-reliant ecclesial communities".<sup>130</sup> As we noted earlier, the 'Industrial Mission' which Booth envisaged would be so advanced as eventually to include trade carried out by black people at an international scale.<sup>131</sup> However, some missionaries seriously questioned whether, because of the degraded condition of the Africans, "they could not be made self-supporting within one or two generations".<sup>132</sup> And hence they were content just to give their African converts basic skills. It is possibly because of such an attitude that Booth strongly felt that "many of them [European missionaries] need teaching that the African is inferior in opportunity only and he is expressly commanded to give him the same measure of opportunity which he would desire for himself".<sup>133</sup> Booth defended his socio-economic reforms on the grounds that:

Because the native, as he sees the comforts and power the European gathers around him and studiously retains, he can not get rid of the belief that the European has come there to help himself primarily, and not for the sole purpose of helping the African. The only thing that will convince them of a real desire to help them, is to retire and leave them in possession of their own stations to teach their own people. Not until we have done that and kept nothing for ourselves, shall we have given Christ's measure -pressed down and shaken together.<sup>134</sup>

It must be pointed out that Booth's concept of 'Industrial Mission' had already been suggested in West Africa as developing "several modernised, independent, and self-sufficient Christian nation-States".<sup>135</sup> But such an idea had been thwarted in 1870 by the arrival of "a new type of European missionary, speaking 'a language that African missionaries had not been accustomed to hear in times past even from their most severe critics'"<sup>136</sup> It must be noted that Booth's radical stance on 'Africa for the African' made him very unpopular from the onset, even among fellow European colleagues. This clearly seems to have been one of the main reasons why he severed his links with his earlier Industrial Missions in 1894. Booth later recalled how his "policy to the natives was severely challenged as too liberal by my co workers. I took this as indicating that the Lord had need of me for other work and so retired in the close of 1894, there being many workers and supporters glad to carry on the work on the level they approved".<sup>137</sup> The change in policy is seen in that when Hamilton succeeded Booth, his objects for the Zambesi Industrial Mission did not include self-reliance or African Independence, as Booth advocated. His Aims for Industrial Mission were as follows:

- (1) The evangelization of the native African by means of self-supporting missions.
- (2) To open up an avenue into the great African mission field through which more of CHRIST'S servants may enter and, while engaged in an industry that makes for their support, gives them the privilege and opportunity of bearing their witness for Jesus among a people they could not reach otherwise.
- (3) To make mission revenue reproductive. That is, so to use the

gifts of God's people in developing the resources of the country, while preaching the Gospel, that it will again yield a revenue for the perpetuation of the work.<sup>138</sup>

The above model is what many missionaries followed in their missions stations. And this was in marked difference to what Booth advocated, whose idea was to allow black people to be independent of European control in mission centres. Booth's latter concept was recounted by F.B. Bridgman in the paper he presented at the Natal Missionary Conference entitled 'The Ethiopian Movement and other Independent Factions characterised by a National Spirit'. He asserted that 'Africa for the African' Appeal "from first to last, was Mr Booth's keynote. Mission stations, schools, farms, and all industries were to be manned by Africans only".<sup>139</sup> However, it must be emphasized that such a radical concept of African Industrial Mission was also condemned as 'A Delusive Scheme' and 'A Bogus Mission on the Zambezi' by editors of The Christian Express and The Central African Planter respectively.<sup>140</sup> But Booth was equally swift and decisive in response to such remarks. He retorted R.S. Hynde's article:

That the Editor of a paper such as the Central African Planter devoted to the exploitation of the Native and his country and the organ of men in such haste to be rich that for the same work which costs the Natal planter 30/- per month, the British Central Africa planter pays the Native equal to 2/- per month, per man and half price for women's work (i.e. 8 yards of Calico per month costing 3d per yard, women half the quantity) that one of such a body of men should use venomous title A Bogus Mission on the Zambezi is not to be wondered at. ...<sup>141</sup>

And to the editor of The Christian Express, he mildly noted:

The painful feature in connection with the leading article headed A Delusive Scheme is this, that godly men should be so far misled as to use weapons forged by men blinded by their own interests or the interests of the planter class whose cause they are pledged to maintain.

To find the editor of the *Christian Express* practically endorsing the planter's unscrupulous title 'A Bogus Mission' seems to the writer inexpressingly sad.<sup>142</sup>

Joseph Booth, as we have seen in previous chapters, had a clear and simple view of Scripture. His attitudes were reminiscent of those of the Radical Reformers or Anabaptists.

This simple belief in Biblical authority differed from the mainstream of European thinking about Africa at the time, missionary as well as non-missionary. He was also free from the intellectual belief in the fundamental and immutable gulf between the races which Social Darwinist thought had popularized in the Britain and United States of the time.<sup>143</sup>

Thus it was his simple Biblical faith and his belief in the oneness of humanity that made his views, despite some millennial eccentricities, present a similar challenge to white supremacy as late twentieth century theology of liberation has done. Like that Black Theology, Booth made no concession whatsoever to African traditional culture or to African traditional religion and so his thought was in no way a precursor of African Theology. This was so, despite the fact that he read about the M'bona shrine at Khulubvi in Southern Malawi, visited the area in 1894 and interacted with its guardians.<sup>144</sup> Significantly, however, this almost unique contact between a white missionary and the spirit guardians was not followed up by Booth.

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- 129 Erich Geldbach, 'Individualism and Collectivism in Baptist and Anabaptist Tradition and the Problem of Poverty' IN Richard Libowitz, Faith and Freedom - A Tribute to Franklin H. Littel (Oxford, 1987), p.135.
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- 131 The Christian Express, op. cit. p. 174. See also F.B. Bridgman, 'The Ethiopian Movements in South Africa' Missionary Review of the World, vol xvii June, 1904. He writes: "He [Booth] estimated that if one-sixth of the civilized blacks of Africa and America gave one penny a day, there would be available £3,000 annually. This sum invested yearly for ten years, was to purchase and work great plantations of sugar, coffee, and cotton; it was to buy and operate steamers not only on the African lakes and rivers, but also oceanic to England and America". p.438.
- 132 The Christian Express, vol. xxvi (307) January, 1896, p. 9.
- 133 Joseph Booth, Africa for the African, op.cit. p.45.
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 Andrew Porter, 'Cambridge, Keswick, and late-nineteenth century Attitudes to Africa'. The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, vol.5, p.7.
- 136 Ibid.
- 137 Joseph Booth, Africa for the African op.cit. p.45.
- 138 A. Hamilton, 'Missions in British Central Africa'. The Zambezi Industrial Mission, The Christian, January, 1908.
- 139 The Christian Express, vol. xxxiii (397) October 1, 1903, p.150. See also Frederick B. Bridgman, 'Ethiopian movement in South Africa', Missionary Review of the World, vol xvii, June, 1904, p.438. However, he cynically added: "The one illustrious exception was to be - Joesph Booth!" Note again that both articles do not show the date Bridgman presented his paper to the

Natal Missionary Conference.

- 140 The Christian Express, vol. xxvi, (312) June 1, 1896.
- 141 The Christian Express, op. cit. November 2, 1896.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 vide Philip Curtin, The Image of Africa, passim.
- 144 Joseph Booth, C154/9 in (Bodleian), pp. 17-22. See also Matthew Schoffeleers, 'The Interaction of the M'bona Cult and Christianity, 1859-1963' IN T.O. Ranger and John Weller [eds.] Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa (London, 1975), pp.20-21.

## CHAPTER VII

**AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN DOCTRINE AND THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION:  
BOOTH'S ROLE AND INFLUENCE ON AFRICAN NATIONALISM**

George Shepperson in his article 'External Factors in the Development of African Nationalism with Particular Reference to British Central Africa', singles Booth out as a European example, "who had a pronounced influence on all the African politicians of Nyasaland before 1915".<sup>1</sup> He further states, "If his influence was nowhere so profound on the emergence of African nationalism as it was in Nyasaland, he made some little mark on the South and East African political scene before the First World War".<sup>2</sup> Shepperson's observation is shared by Harlan, who also states that Booth was indeed "another central figure in the history of the African nationalist idea".<sup>3</sup> But Boeder, critical of Booth, suggests that his 'Africa for the African' slogan "was just propaganda".<sup>4</sup> But was it? This section intends to trace the role of Booth in the politics of African Nationalism, particularly in British Central Africa and South Africa.

It is important to point out from the onset that Booth did not see any dichotomy between religion and politics, a thought that was so fundamental in nineteenth century Europe. He noted:

But the religious world will exclaim, 'We have nothing to do with politics'. This also must be combatted. It is one of the favourite excuses for leaving wickedness in high places to go unchecked, unchallenged and unremedied. It is a clever evasion born of the craft and subtlety of the devil, from which, 'Good Lord, deliver us'.<sup>5</sup>

And hence he resolved "to pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy: 'AFRICA

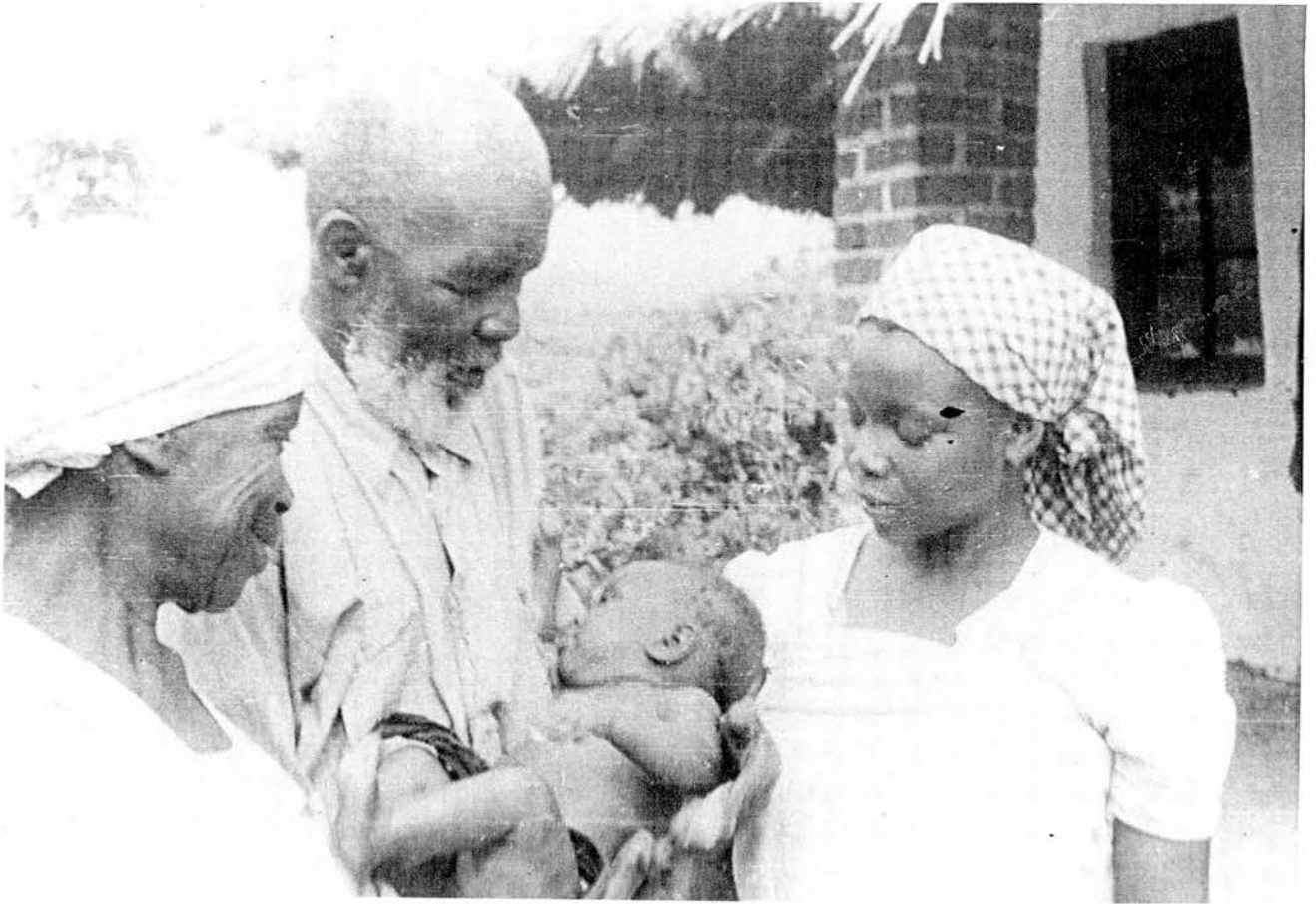


Plate 15. Morrison Malinki, his wife Deliza, daughter and grandchild. Malinki (although he later became conservative) was in early 1897 a signatory with John Chilembwe to Booth's 'Africa for the African' ACU scheme in Blantyre - BCA.

FOR THE AFRICAN"<sup>6</sup> which it seems included the political liberation of Africa.

In 1894, Booth claimed he had organized refugee centres for slaves who had escaped from the Ngoni raids and otherwise "would be speared to death, or sold to the Arabs and put in the slave-stick".<sup>7</sup> But his turning point was when he began to bring together through his 'African Christian Union' scheme Africans from Nyasaland and South Africa for a common political cause. Langworthy states: "As Mataka was mentioned as Central African Delegate and Manager of the Mlonda estate in the ACU proposal it is likely that Booth took him to Durban not primarily to quell the cannibalism rumor, but to further the plans of the ACU, which were already being developed".<sup>8</sup> It is important to point out that Booth did not limit himself to African political affairs as we shall later discover in detail, but he also was aware of the plight of Indians in South Africa when he noted, "These poor Hindoos have a long list of real grievances against the planters to whom they are bound for a five years period under the indenture system. These are being presented exhaustively by one of their number to the government authorities in India".<sup>9</sup> Langworthy suggests that this Indian representative may well have been Ghandi, whom Booth knew from his earlier trips to Durban and "was aware of his activities from the press or conversations".<sup>10</sup> However, another significant political influence Booth left in South Africa after the attempt to launch the 'African Christian Union' in 1896, is suggested by Shepperson. He states:

An interesting hypothesis has recently been advanced that Booth either met or influenced in Natal at this time Andries Le Fleur, who capitalized on African and Griqua grievances on the East Griqualand side of the border when rinderpest broke out there in 1897. Le Fleur plotted amongst the Griqua and Hlangweni people with the slogan,

'East Griqualand for the Griquas and the natives' which could be seen as a variant of the 'Africa for the African' slogan which Booth's visit was popularizing in South Africa at this time.<sup>11</sup>

Shepperson also adds that "Le Fleur was later associated with the Griqua Independent Church and the Griqua Land Bank, Industries and Development Corporation, both of which have the ring of Booth-style enterprises".<sup>12</sup>

In 1897, Booth brought together for the first time two important men who later played a major role in the cause of African nationalism. Booth noted: "Now, in the year 1897 Pastor J.L. Dube, Chilembwe, and Booth were together at Brooklyn, U.S.A., on the same errand - all pleading for the commencement of Native Independent Missions".<sup>13</sup> Shepperson and Price describe J.L. Dube as a comrade of Booth and Chilembwe in America for a brief period.<sup>14</sup> However, their acquaintance resumed later.

But Booth's first political challenge to the British Government was through the petition he drew up in 1899 on behalf of Africans in Nyasaland. It is said after he had toured the country, he soon discovered "there was a more directly political task at hand. Therefore he set himself to draw up and circulate for the signature and assent of Africans a petition to Queen Victoria".<sup>15</sup> The petition asked:

- (1) That the entire amount of revenue from the tax known as the Hut Tax [Poll Tax], may be expended solely upon the education of the natives of the Protectorate, to the point of equality with the average British Education.
- (2) That a pledge be given from your Government that the Protectorate shall never pass from the direct control of your Home Government unless it be to restore the Territory to an approved Native Government.
- (3) That a superior education shall be gratuitously provided

to not less than five per cent of such scholars as pass the average standard of British national education to be of a standard qualifying its recipients for Government, professional, mechanical, or mercantile, operations.

- (4) That a period not exceeding twenty-one years be fixed for the ultimate restoration of the whole territory of the British Central African Protectorate with its entire revenues to Native ownerships and Government.
- (5) That we be henceforth exempted from all obligations to bear arms against our brethren of other tribes bordering upon the Protectorate and that we have perfect liberty to refuse to shed the blood of our fellow countrymen in any part of Africa.<sup>16</sup>

A brief comment on the political issues Booth raised on behalf of Africans especially as related to the Hut Tax. Many Africans complained that there was nothing to show that this tax had been used to benefit Africans in any way at all. Many came to see that the tax was a way of forcing men into the employ of the European settlers in order to find cash with which to pay it. It was a tax about which Africans protested both traditionalists and the new nationalists.

Booth did not suggest its abolition but that it should be used for the benefit of the African taxpayer. In particular, he wished it to be used on African education, which in turn would ensure proper African training in preparation for future leadership. It had always been Booth's argument that proper training was essential if Africans were to be allowed to decide their own destiny. And what is more interesting is the political timetable he drew for Nyasaland to attain Self-Government by 1921. He also began the campaign he was to continue for many years of opposing the way the British used African troops to expand the Empire. This became all the more

poignant as his protégé, John Chilembwe, was to point out in 1914, when the Germans and British each used them against the other in South-West and East Africa. Booth's petition concluded:

We present this our petition in the hope and belief that your Majesty as well as the great Christian people over whom your Majesty holds sway are reverently wishful to put in practice the Christian precept, 'Therefore whatsoever ye would that man should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, Booth's choice of the text (Matt 7:12) underlines the spiritual beliefs which underlay his socio-political views. He frequently employed this passage in his call for Equal Rights and social justice to be meted out to Africans.

However, his petition was greeted with immense hostility, especially from the pro-Colonial Government local newspaper 'The Central African Times'. In the editorial entitled 'MR BOOTH'S PETITION' it said:

The petition itself is not worth comment. In the first place every African who signs it will do so under false pretences. Not one of them are capable of understanding the purport and full meaning of such a petition and not ninety percent wish any of the things named in the petition. Therefore all signatures which may be attached to it are worthless, and worse than worthless in the majority of cases, for they will be distinct evidence of misconception on the part of the signers. We notice the petition only to point out the danger of irresponsible people like Mr Booth being allowed to foist such things upon the natives. The natives here are not Christian, not one in a hundred pretends to be, nor have they given up the idea that land belongs to them, not to govern and use aright but to harrow and pillage. Such sentiments therefore as are contained in the petition are palpable absurdity and will deceive no one but the misguided native".<sup>18</sup>

And because the petition was only intended to cause mischief, the editorial suggested that in the interest of Africans themselves, law and order, that H.M. Commission should bring the circulation of the petition to a halt. And further urged that "Mr

Booth should be given a free passage to Chinde".<sup>19</sup> and also warned of Booth and those who supported him, "their efforts are directed against the highest good of the African and tend only to bring ridicule upon themselves and their so-called Christianity".<sup>20</sup>

In spite of such negative comments, waged especially against Booth, Shepperson and Price argue that his petition "had attractions for both the illiterate tribal African and the new and aspiring literates like Chilembwe".<sup>21</sup>

Booth's political influence on African Nationalism is again suggested when his name was associated with Bambata Poll Tax Rebellion of 1906 in South Africa. Although Booth was in Britain at the time of the revolt, it was suggested that his 1896 'African Christian Union' with its 'Africa for the African' doctrine seems to have indirectly played a part in the actions the Africans took. J.L. Dube, when giving evidence following the aftermath of a Poll Tax rising at which about 4,000 Africans died, told the Native Affairs Commission, "There were black sheep in every race. the first man who wanted to preach Ethiopianism was an English man named Booth, and it seemed to him that the recent rebellion had served a useful purpose, if only because it showed to the Government who were and who were not preaching Ethiopianism".<sup>22</sup> And when the chairman of the Commission asked Dube to explain what he understood by the term 'Ethiopianism', he said, "he did not know much about Ethiopianism, but understood they encouraged the throwing off of the yoke of the English people, politically as well as religiously".<sup>23</sup> He added;

He did not think, however, that this movement ought to be made the excuse for preventing native evangelists from preaching the Gospel to their own people. Those who propagated this teaching ought to be

punished individually; the whole population should not be placed under disabilities because of the wrongdoing of one or two men.<sup>24</sup>

Dube seems to have been at pains to distance himself from Booth and his radical Ethiopian ideas. But one asks why, when Dube himself had such inclinations. Roux's observation is worth noting. He states, "There were educated Africans who refused to be placated by being allowed special privileges. One of the most distinguished of these, John Navuma Nembula ... joined the Ethiopian movement in Natal in 1896".<sup>25</sup> Although Roux does not mention Dube by name, he was one of the leaders of the educated Africans in South Africa at that time. As Shula Marks says, "Most leaders of the Natal Native Congress [Dube certainly included] were to denounce the 'Ethiopian Movement', at any rate insofar as it was anti-white, and to dissociate themselves from it".<sup>26</sup> During the enquiry there was even an African witness who went so far as to allege that, "He saw no grievance of sufficient gravity to cause a rising, or to account for the recent Rebellion",<sup>27</sup> and in fact he "thought the Rebellion had been primarily caused owing to the people having so much freedom".<sup>28</sup> Dube was not like that witness however. What was the point of associating himself with an already defeated movement that would only gain him arrest possibly, and government suspicion certainly.

Just like the African pastors of Blantyre Mission when giving evidence to the Chilembwe Rising Commission of Enquiry who first dissociated themselves from Chilembwe and then went on to blame unjust White rule for the Rising, Dube went on to attack white behaviour in Natal. He resolutely insisted that the attitude of Europeans towards Africans was the root cause of the crisis. He felt that the African

"was not regarded as having any definite rights. Some [Europeans] would soon beat their native servants than their dogs. This attitude aroused feelings of hatred in the native".<sup>29</sup> He added that "some Europeans if they happened to meet a native who did not take off his hat, would get off their horse and beat him, asking him what he meant by not saluting".<sup>30</sup> And possibly having Booth in mind, among other white people he knew, noted, "No European could become popular amongst Europeans if he did real justice to the natives. This was apparent to the natives generally".<sup>31</sup> Another witness during the inquiry feared that "so long as one class of laws governed the native people and another the Europeans, it could be impossible to bring about harmony between the two races".<sup>32</sup>

By 1906, there was a great awareness of the spirit of black consciousness among Africans and hence historians such as Shula Marks attribute such influence at least partially to Booth's whirlwind visit to South Africa in 1896. Marks argues that Booth did encourage a "turbulent spirit in African Missions and politics".<sup>33</sup> Bridgman also described the long-term results of Booth's 'African Christian Union' scheme of 1896 as having led eventually to "mean political control also".<sup>34</sup> But in 1906, such notions were quickly muted by an official statement on 'Ethiopianism' following the Rebellion:

The natives must be made clearly to understand, and to realize that the presence and predominance of the white race will be preserved at all hazards, and that all attempts to destroy its hegemony, whether overt or covert such as the Ethiopian propaganda, will be promptly punished, instead of being disdainfully treated as in the past.<sup>35</sup>

It must be noted, however, that Booth's scheme influenced not only black people but

white as well. For instance Ralph Tatham, a socialist, developed in September 1906 a project in Natal which bore "some resemblance to Joseph Booth's African Christian Union of the 1890s".<sup>36</sup> And one of the main objects of the enterprise was "for the political representation of African grievances and to eliminate the ill-feeling between black and white in Natal".<sup>37</sup> Although his scheme did not last long, he was, however, to be "closely in touch with John Dube, Josiah Gumede, and Saul Msane",<sup>38</sup> African Nationalists who were well known to Booth. In 1912, when the 'Union-wide South African Native National Congress' was formally organized, and John Dube elected its first president, someone remarked, "I thank Bambata. I thank Bambata very much. Would this spirit might continue! I do not mean the Bambata of the bush who perished at Nkandla, but I mean this new spirit which we have just explained".<sup>39</sup> Shula Marks summed up, "This was the most important lesson of the rebellion".<sup>40</sup> Booth's political influence in 1906 especially as it relates to the Bambata Hut Tax Rebellion, must be judged against his 'African Christian Union' of 1896 and the long-term effect it had on Africans, which Dube recalled years later and attributed its spirit to it.

In 1908, Booth was back in South Africa and again highly political in his activities. Peregrino reported to Windam, the Secretary for Native Affairs, "Booth is a very dangerous man as he teaches the doctrine: Africa for the African".<sup>41</sup> And in another despatch, clearly showing Peregrino was monitoring Booth's movements, he told Windam again:

Booth has left Cape Town and is travelling to Pretoria. He is

extremely dangerous as he is protected by his white colour. He gathers crowds of Africans around him and preaches openly: Africa for the Black Africans.<sup>42</sup>

Booth protested vigorously against segregation laws that were being seen enacted even in certain white-dominated churches. He could not come to terms with the fact that some Christian white churches refused to allow Africans to worship with them. In defiance of such laws, Booth, along with twelve of his African proteges, attempted to enter a white church on 2nd May 1909. A.J. Hoffman, a detective, reported:

Booth accompanied by his 12 Native students went to the European Christ Church in Pretoria and entered the church. The Natives were ejected and Booth caused a disturbance. A Constable was called, he found Booth in front of the Church door demanding an entrance for his Native students. The Constable was told to arrest Booth and Booth asked for the Church regulations to be produce[d]. He was not arrested but left the Church.<sup>43</sup>

There is no doubt that Peregrino was relentless in spying on Booth and his allegedly political activities. Shepperson emphasizes that Peregrino "was very much a police informer".<sup>44</sup> As we saw in Chapter V, it may have been for this reason that Booth instructed his students not to divulge any information to people other than their members "as he was teaching Theology and it was dangerous in the Transvaal".<sup>45</sup> This was certainly so, since his political theology was wrapped up in his 'Africa for the African' doctrine. Peregrino, on the other hand, was aware of the aspirations of his fellow Africans and the need to create a platform from which to air their grievances, yet he ends up acting as an informer for the government. Therefore, I find Parsons' assessment of Peregrino as 'an early pan-Africanist' unconvincing, although he prefers to argue:

F.Z.S. Peregrino, like J.T. Jabavu, did not find himself in sympathy

with the young nationalists of the N.N.C. [Native National Congress (ANC)] who were trying to work outside the narrow, white-dominated, parliamentary system of the new Union of South Africa. Only the Cape Province in which Peregrino and Jabavu lived had an African franchise; the other three provinces barred Africans.<sup>46</sup>

He then adds, "Peregrino did not seem to find his involvement in South Africa party politics incompatible with continuing pan-Africanist activity".<sup>47</sup> And indeed all the more judging from the manner in which he colluded with police and the Government Administration against Booth and his 'Africa for the African' scheme, Peregrino did more harm than good to the general African political aspirations. Peregrino began to realise that Africans saw him as an informer and this caused him a certain amount of embarrassment. He told Windham, the Secretary of Native Affairs:

As the result of my activities in the exposition of the methods of the man Booth another excuse has been found by the parties referred to for my misrepresentation to the unthinking rabble to whom I am represented as being an enemy of the people because recently I have betrayed to the authorities one who is the friends of the people and is engaged in exposing their grievances.<sup>48</sup>

Peregrino seems here to acknowledge the role Booth was playing on behalf of black South Africans. And for this reason he requested the Secretary for Native Affairs if he could assist him and his family to move somewhere else where he was less well known and could possibly continue his spying activities undetected. He noted:

I have I believe intimated I have been considering the advisability if not of transferring directly my activities to some point on the transvaal either Johannesburg or Transvaal of at least attempting to open a connection at either of those places and with view to ultimate settlement.<sup>49</sup>

Booth's political influence was felt in British Central Africa when, as we have seen, Elliot Kamwana promulgated his millennial doctrine with its direct socio-

political message. On 8 September 1909, Colonel Seely, the Secretary of State for Colonies, informed the House of Commons during the question time that Kamwana taught:

That in October, 1914, the second Advent will take place, that Christ will then abolish all the present forms of government, that there will be no more taxation; that all the white population will disappear from Nyasaland and that the country will be placed entirely in the hands of the natives, who will govern themselves.<sup>50</sup>

'The Livingstonia News', published by the Free Church of Scotland in Nyasaland, described Kamwana's message as "THE FIRST WAVE OF ETHIOPIANISM IN CENTRAL AFRICA".<sup>51</sup> Apparently Kamwana was heard to be telling his audience, "I have baptized 7,000 whites in the South; I have dined with members of Parliament. We shall build our ships, make our own powder, and make or import our own guns, etc. ie, when the revenue is in our own hands".<sup>52</sup> Kamwana told them "there would be no more oppression from tax gatherers. These people there (indicating the Residency on the hill) you soon will see no more; for the Government will go".<sup>53</sup> Witnesses who knew and heard Kamwana later in life testified of his political stance, "He could stand up and shout emotionally: 'Kwacha Africa Yuka' [It is dawn, Africa, Arise]".<sup>54</sup>

Kamwana came under much criticism from Colonial Government and missionary societies. W.A. Elmslie, a particularly conservative Free Church missionary, noted:

It is a symptom of a common African disease 'mafumu onse' Chiefs all) which is at the basis of Ethiopianism. The native can jump into a white man's clothes and fancy he is every whit as good as he, so the next step is to think that he no longer needs his presence and aid. This is a failing in the African against which Missions have to battle.<sup>55</sup>

The colonial government also found the Ethiopian ideas highly seditious and unsettling politically to the African mind. However, it is interesting to note that Caverhill, who read a paper at Blantyre Mission Staff Conference, told the delegates that, in his view:

Ethiopianism is caused by forces that are operating all over the world. At home we have the Irish Nationalists; abroad we have grave unrest in India and Egypt caused by the desire of nations to have a separate existence untrammelled by foreign supervision. We need not, therefore, altogether blame the African if, into the brain which we have educated, the feeling of patriotism should come, and if his first step should be the formation of a Church peculiarly his own.<sup>56</sup>

This was in keeping with the much more critical attitude towards white rule that Blantyre had exhibited from 1891 onwards compared to other missions. It is interesting to note that most of Kamwana's political ideas were attributed to Booth's influence, even long after they had separated.<sup>57</sup>

Clearly, Booth had also an influence on Charles Domingo. Through a regular correspondence between them, the latter was introduced to Booth's religious and political views. Domingo wrote, "It is Pastor Booth whom God uses wonderfully that poor Nyasaland African should have right freedom of possessing self-governing 'Churches of Christ' of Bandawe and Ngoniland".<sup>58</sup> He stressed the need for development through the establishment of more schools to provide Africans with basic and higher education to prepare them for total independence. It was his desire "That Nyassas should now start to rise up as our fellow country Japan is. Of course it may take longer time, still it must speak out. Nyassa country now thirty-six years old; is he still to be a child that does not know 'to hoe for himself'."<sup>59</sup> Hence

Domingo became an "articulate critic of the policies of the mission and colonial government".<sup>60</sup> When the Colonial Government legislated laws he felt were unjust, he was equally unhappy with the missionaries who in his view went along or even adopted such policies without objection. He told Booth, his mentor:

The Government is weak to rise up in its footsteps. The gainers of money and missionaries are very poor to try to kick out the wiles of Satan. Now, when those Brothers and Sisters wish to send the missionaries or the white residents do they (the missionaries) think they will be here (Nyasaland) as they were in America? I say 'NO' - as soon as they will be in Zomba they will not then refuse the Satanic Rules or Regulations formed by the Europeans (ie. Nyasaland).<sup>61</sup>

Another issue that Domingo raised his concern about was the Government increase in Hut Tax [Poll Tax] from 6 to 8 shillings. He noted that "The Liberty of Religion is affected, but the liberty for people to receive more pay so that they might pay their hut-tax fairly is not given out".<sup>62</sup> He was critical of the government authorities for their failure to take into account the ability to pay when he added, "And yet there are some poor fellows in money who have nothing to pay for their hut-tax".<sup>63</sup> Domingo also reprimanded the tribal chiefs for not resisting the unfair colonial policies on behalf of their subjects. He noted, "Had they been wise, they would have changed Nyasaland".<sup>64</sup> Langworthy argues that "Domingo's criticism was based in a religious principle applied to a society at large, which thus came to have political implications ... the sacred conditioned views of the secular".<sup>65</sup> Domingo envisaged national liberty being attained at some stage when he also argued, "It took 430 years, and the Israelites were rescued; It takes long time to possess jewels of gold or so. It may take sometimes to possess jewels of Independency among we the Nyasas".<sup>66</sup> It must be noted that to strengthen Domingo's resolve to press on with his call for radical



Plate 16. Joseph Booth, his wife, Annie Susan, daughter Mary Winifred 'Peggy' and the British Christian Union group in South Africa, probably taken in 1913. (BCU was the socio-political wing of Booth's Christian activities).

reform, Booth introduced him to South African black nationalists. Booth wrote, "It needs to be born in mind that the leading pastors are in frequent correspondence with free and able South African leaders such as President J.L. Dube [SANNC leader] and editor Tengo Jabavu, who both know their language and have read their letters here".<sup>67</sup> This shows yet again the interest Booth had to bring the Africans from Nyasaland and South Africa to work together for a common political goal and that was national freedom.

In February 1913, Booth organized what he called 'The British Christian Union', "a variant of his African Christian Union scheme of the late nineteenth century".<sup>68</sup> It is important to note that Booth substituted the term 'British' for 'African' as a tactical move, possibly designed not to prejudice the minds of those blacks and whites who still recalled the 1896 scheme and its extreme radical pro-African notions. the objects of this new organization were:

- I. To discover and unite such persons as are wishful to uplift and give equality of opportunity and freedom to the whole of our Indian, African and other coloured races.
- II. To positively refuse to shed each others blood, or countenance the same, in order to retain, or regain, territory acquired or held by forceful methods.
- III. To invite the co-operation of American Christians in an effort to facilitate the repatriation of spiritually and industrially qualified Negroes, on Peace principles, to their African Fatherland.
- IV. To train selected students for various occupations: and especially as exponents of the Gospel of Peace and Brotherly Love, on earth, as an essential to Peace with God.
- V. To declare the Gospel of Peace and Goodwill to every tribe and people within the British Empire, and solemnly seek to

substitute the rule of love and co-operation for that of brute force.<sup>69</sup>

In the first manifesto of the 'British Christian Union' published on 13 February, 1913, and intended for circulation, Booth acknowledged that African societies had "from various motives, been gradually drawn within the great British family".<sup>70</sup> And hence he contended that "Their future for weal or woe depends largely, upon the Christian people in the Homeland of Britain".<sup>71</sup> Booth no doubt saw Britain as playing a major role in determining or resolving Africa's problems because of its unique position of influence on the continent it had created as an empire. However he expressed great concern at the rapid deterioration of race relations and cited the South Africa situation with which he was familiar as an example. He noted three basic issues: white military conscriptions, the Native Land Act, which brought legal discrimination on the grounds of race to the Cape for the first time since the first decades of the nineteenth century, and taxation, as worrying propositions. Booth wrote, "In South Africa - the most advanced section - the conquering white race now compel, by law every white youth attaining the age of 17 years, to register himself and commence to train for war, under a penalty of £25 fine, or imprisonment in default".<sup>72</sup> However, Booth observed with horror:

The official notice now posted at the Police Stations of South Africa, demanding the surrender of all youths of European descent for Registration and war preparations, is sending a mighty thrill, as a kind of deliberate menace, through the hearts of some few Europeans, and of all educated, as well as unskilled Natives who abhor the possibilities of massacre incident to such lines of procedure.<sup>73</sup>

Booth argued that the whole exercise was uncalled for because it was not intended "against external foes is manifest, since the Natives are excluded from the right of

defence of their homes".<sup>74</sup> And argued that after all the coastal defence of British Africa had been secured by the British navy. What concerned Booth even much more was that Christ's Gospel of Peace and Goodwill had made little or no impact "since bishops, and clergy, preachers and people of almost every type of faith approve the popular conscription method of occupation".<sup>75</sup> Booth was disappointed that white religious leaders in particular did not condemn such segregation laws being instituted by the Union Government. It must be stated that Booth's observation was echoed by Solomon Plaatje, who viewed General Smuts' policy not to arm Africans but whites only as grossly 'unfair'.<sup>76</sup> The ANC delegation later voiced the same concern with Lloyd George, the British Premier, regarding the 'Defence Force Act of 1911'.

They argued:

Having disarmed the natives politically, the white people of South Africa proceeded to strengthen themselves by passing in the Union Parliament the Defence Force Act, 1911, in which 'colour bar' was introduced, since it became law that no person could become a member of the Citizen Force unless he was of European descent.<sup>77</sup>

They argued that 'The Defence Force Act of 1911' introduced by General Smuts prohibited them from becoming soldiers of the King.<sup>78</sup>

Booth then highlighted in his 'British Christian Union' circular the Native Land Act which at the time was only a Bill being passed through Parliament. He noted that in concert with the Defence Force Act, 1911, "At the same time compulsory segregation of the Native, in defined areas, is openly and boldly advocated as the coming policy, combined with severe taxation without representation (the Cape Province excepted)", and added, "Such are the present proposals of the majority of the South African Colonists towards their fellow subjects. Brute force is

thus the exalted hope".<sup>79</sup> In summing up these and all other issues, he noted:

The Natives, therefore, together with some of his white friends, respectively submit that the segregation and conscription policy, the heavy taxation, the denial of Representation, the refusal of adequate educational aid, is utterly unworthy of the fundamental principles which the British nation is based. A people who so stoutly demand freedom, must surely secure and bestow freedom and equality of treatment for all within their borders.<sup>80</sup>

And Booth further argued that in his view:

The British of the Homeland cannot transfer this responsibility to persons who refuse the principles. Hence the fifty millions of Natives look to the Christians of Britain for the aid they need to secure peaceful progress. It lies with them to decide whether British Africa of the future shall be reared upon heaps of dead men's rotting bones, and be cemented with their life-blood, as in the recent and gruesome past, or upon the lasting glory of patient, kindly and peaceful advancement.<sup>81</sup>

In the second publication of the 'British Christian Union' of May, 1913, Booth mainly featured the proceedings of the South African Native National Congress [ANC] which he seems had attended. He wrote, "The Native African Congress has declared its reasonable demands", and in his opinion these were "great and swift forward steps," adding that "the following extracts from the recent utterances of leading Natives at the Native National Congress speak for themselves, as being unwittingly the Native justification of the British Christian Union warning and program submitted in February, 1913".<sup>82</sup> Booth first featured Saul Msane, who had supported his African Christian Union scheme<sup>83</sup>, and was now a Vice-President of the ANC. Booth

carefully noted Msane's speech and recorded: "Gentlemen, we have come to the crisis of our national history. South Africa, our home, is being stolen stealthily from us. We are being treated as aliens in our country. We hear from the opposite camp daily these expressions: 'the two white races', 'white South Africa'. Where do we come in".<sup>84</sup> Msane then turned to the Native Land Act and denounced it as "a machination calculated to root out the Native from their ancestral homes and dispossess them of what land they hold or own, and thus take from them the birthright to the soil".<sup>85</sup> There can be no doubt as regards Booth's input and the influence his organization had at the 1913 National Congress. His observations were noted and endorsed in the Congress minutes, as this statement shows: "The Legislative Council of the British Christian Union, in view of the march of events, as recorded, reiterate with added emphasis the assertion that 'The British of the Homeland cannot transfer their responsibility to persons who refuse the principles'.<sup>86</sup> The delegates at the meeting were also unanimous in their disapproval, especially of the Native Land Act of 1913, whose statement Booth again noted, which said:

Having thus rendered the native people helpless and defenceless, the Union Parliament passed the Native Land Act, 1913. Under this Act no native is allowed to buy land, except in the Cape, pending the report of the Lands Commission, which was appointed to find land that was unsuitable for the European settlement, so as to reserve same as an area in which the blackman could buy and own land.<sup>87</sup>

Booth meanwhile took the African cause to the British public the same month the Native Land Act was being legislated through the Union Parliament. When he returned in November "to Cape Town from a tour of some six months in Britain",<sup>88</sup> a Cape Town correspondent of the 'Mlomo Wa Bantu' [Voice of the People] a

Johannesburg newspaper arranged for an interview with him. When asked the purpose of his trip abroad, he replied: "I visited Britain to oppose the current Native policy in the South African Union and in the sections called South Rhodesia and North-East and North-West Rhodesia".<sup>89</sup> Booth claimed he "left Cape Town during the first week in May by the Australian line as it is less anti native than any South African line".<sup>90</sup> Aboard the ship were 400 Australians and 100 South Africans whom he took the opportunity to lecture on 'Britains African problem', which took "two hours in delivery and subsequently two hours in discussion on the same day".<sup>91</sup> Booth told the journalist that the immediate response showed strong opposition "to the equal rights and anti-military programme of the BC.Union".<sup>92</sup> However, after further discussions:

eventually all the ministers and missionaries (7 in number) together with 18 other leading passengers signed a document commending the said lecture to all churches and justice - loving people throughout Britain and the Colonies as also the plea set forth from the Native African Congress of 1913.<sup>93</sup>

It is important to point out that the 'plea' Booth's referred to were some of the resolutions carried out by Congress primarily on the 'Proposed Land Bill' to which he had since published in his British Christian Union pamphlet. It read:

The South African Native National Congress, composed of Chiefs and other delegates in annual meeting assembled, resolves that it is its serious duty to voice the feelings of Natives throughout the land with respect to the important utterances recently made by the Honourable the Minister for Native Affairs. Only a year since the Native population was deeply agitated by the Squatters Bill, a measure which threatened tens of thousands of His Majesty loyal subjects, not only with hardship but even with disaster: but to-day our people everywhere within the Union, and even in the Protectorates, are alarmed as never before by the announcement in Parliament that the Government proposes to introduce a measure whereby Natives shall be barred the

right to purchase or hire land, at least for several years, if not for ever, as may be recommended by a future Commission.

The very suggestion that Natives be prohibited from renting or leasing land, except under degrading condition, fills us with anxiety and forebodings; but the proposal to prevent a person of our race from securing a home in his own name, seems to us the acme of injustice. With a grave sense of its responsibility Congress considers it its unfortunate duty to say publicly that if the proposal of the Honourable Minister ever became law, it will constitute the cruelest act of injustice ever perpetrated upon our people. Our European friends and well wishers have ever urged upon us in season and out of season, that the salvation of the Natives and the Welfare of South Africa depended vitally upon Natives becoming of the soil. Natives have often been praised for their racial trait of love for home, and now, just as they are awakening to the duty of becoming agriculturists and the preserving of family life, they are threatened with a law which would close the door to progress, rob them of a worthy goal and interest in life, and eventually destroy happiness and contentment.

As leaders of our people and humble subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George the Fifth, we consider it our duty to inculcate in the minds of our people loyalty to His Majesty's Throne and Person, and this we shall ever seek to do. We also understand that the effect of such harsh legislation would severely strain the loyalty of the natives.

And this Congress of Chiefs of various tribes and delegates from the towns, villages and locations within and beyond the boundaries of the Union, would respectively request the Government to reconsider the terms of the proposed measure...<sup>94</sup>

Booth enlisted his audience to support and endorse his 'British Christian Union' peace principles document which incorporated ANC demands or resolutions passed at the 1913 Congress meeting whose copy also could "be furnished when desired, or the original be viewed". And in Britain his itinerary took him "from London northward through Herefordshire, Derbyshire, Bedfordshire, Warwickshire and in Scotland at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dunfermline, Tain, Inverness and Dornoth as far as Skibo Castle in Sutherlandshire".<sup>95</sup> His trip ended with a visit at Carnegie's

residence at Skibo Castle where Carnegie informed him that he had "already provided fund of two million pounds, for the spread of peace principles".<sup>96</sup> Booth's overall impression regarding his trip and the best way forward in resolving the African issue is best summed up in what he told the Johannesburg newspaper correspondent: "As one English man holding the honour of his people to be of priceless value, was, and is", he noted:

- (a) that we must set ourselves to obtain the true perspective and not permit the interests of a fortieth part of the population of British Africa, merely because of colour of the skin, to override and outweigh the interests of the fifty millions of natives and their posterity;
- (b) that the British people should set themselves to elaborate a protective educative and native franchise - fostering policy throughout all regions beyond the control of the South African Union and prohibit the sale of native lands to aliens of every kindom oversea[s] except on terms agreed upon by the vote of Africans in concert and capable of understanding the position;
- (c) that a conference of the most advanced Africans and their friends should be called in Britain for the reconsideration of the highest development of both the land resources of British Africa and the vocational and professional training of Native Africans and those of the slave-dispersion;
- (d) that the whole of the lands of Rhodesia and Nyasaland be reserved for native farmers; settlers and planters, free or at a small cost for such natives as find the conditions of the Boer and the British South African Government too irksome;
- (e) that effort be concentrated upon obtaining throughout the South African Union, the native franchise and native representation in order to establish British rule on the consent of the governed<sup>97</sup>

After the Congress meeting of 1913 the South African Native National Congress leadership on behalf of the movement took the initiative to address the Native Land Act with the Government. Its president, Rev. J.L. Dube sent a petition

to General Louis Botha, Minister for Native Affairs, in which he argued that he and the movement "represented practically all the Native tribes of South Africa".<sup>98</sup> The A.N.C. leader told Botha that he strongly felt the aim of the law intended to be imposed on Africans in South Africa was meant "to compel service by taking away means of independence and self-improvement",<sup>99</sup> and added, "We cannot help noticing a difference in the explanation which is given to the European from that which is given to the Natives".<sup>100</sup> Botha in reply snubbed Dube first by requesting a junior minister in his department to respond to Dube's petition. The letter obviously dictated nonetheless by Botha dismissed Dube's grave concerns as not representing "all the Native tribes of South Africa",<sup>101</sup> and arguing that "there were a large and important tribes and various sections of the Natives of the Union which your Congress cannot truly claim to represent in this matter".<sup>102</sup> One notices even as early as this period, the Government's strategy of 'divide and rule' was already rife, as Botha's reply suggests. The South African Native National Congress proposal to nominate their own candidate to serve as a member of the Commission which was to look into the ramifications of the Act was turned down as unnecessary. In view of such responses, Dube wrote Botha again to inform him that a deputation to England was being arranged and added, "we have already done all that we found possible to do with the Government here, before the bill was passed; but scarcely any notice was taken of our representatives".<sup>103</sup>

When the delegation left for England in May, 1914, composed of "Rev J.L. Dube, Dr Rubusana, Mr Saul Msane, Thos U. Mapikela, Mr Sol. Plaatje"<sup>104</sup> the Union Government dispatched A.P. Apthorp to England as well "to place himself at

the disposal of the Sec of State in connection with the Native Land Act".<sup>105</sup> the British Government noted him as "one of the officials of the lands Branch of the Native Affairs Department".<sup>106</sup> There is no doubt that the papers Apthorp brought with him to place before Lewis Harcourt, the Secretary of State for the Colonies greatly prejudiced him against giving the African delegation a fair hearing. Even before the deputation arrived, rumours were already circulating both in Britain and South Africa that the Imperial Government wouldn't involve itself in the matter. The African deputation expressed great concern:

that His Majesty's Government has already notified the Union Government of South Africa that His Majesty will not be advised to exercise power of disallowance - this decision, which had already been intimated to us in South Africa, has caused deep and widespread regret amongst the natives of South Africa.<sup>107</sup>

And hence the delegation had even to beg to be allowed to lay before him [Harcourt] in person"<sup>108</sup> their case. When the meeting eventually convened "At the interview" Plaatje, who was the General Secretary at the time recalled how Harcourt "took notes of nothing and asked no questions. On every point he had 'the assurance of General Botha' to the contrary".<sup>109</sup>

During the same time the South African black delegation was in England, Peter Nyambo and possibly Kanduna as well were also in the country to present the Native Appeal to the King. Shepperson and Price state that although the idea of a petition was Nyambo's, however, "the finished document that he produced in 1914 was strongly influenced by Booth in both form and content".<sup>110</sup> It is worth noting that although the Appeal was described as representing the views of "the Natives of

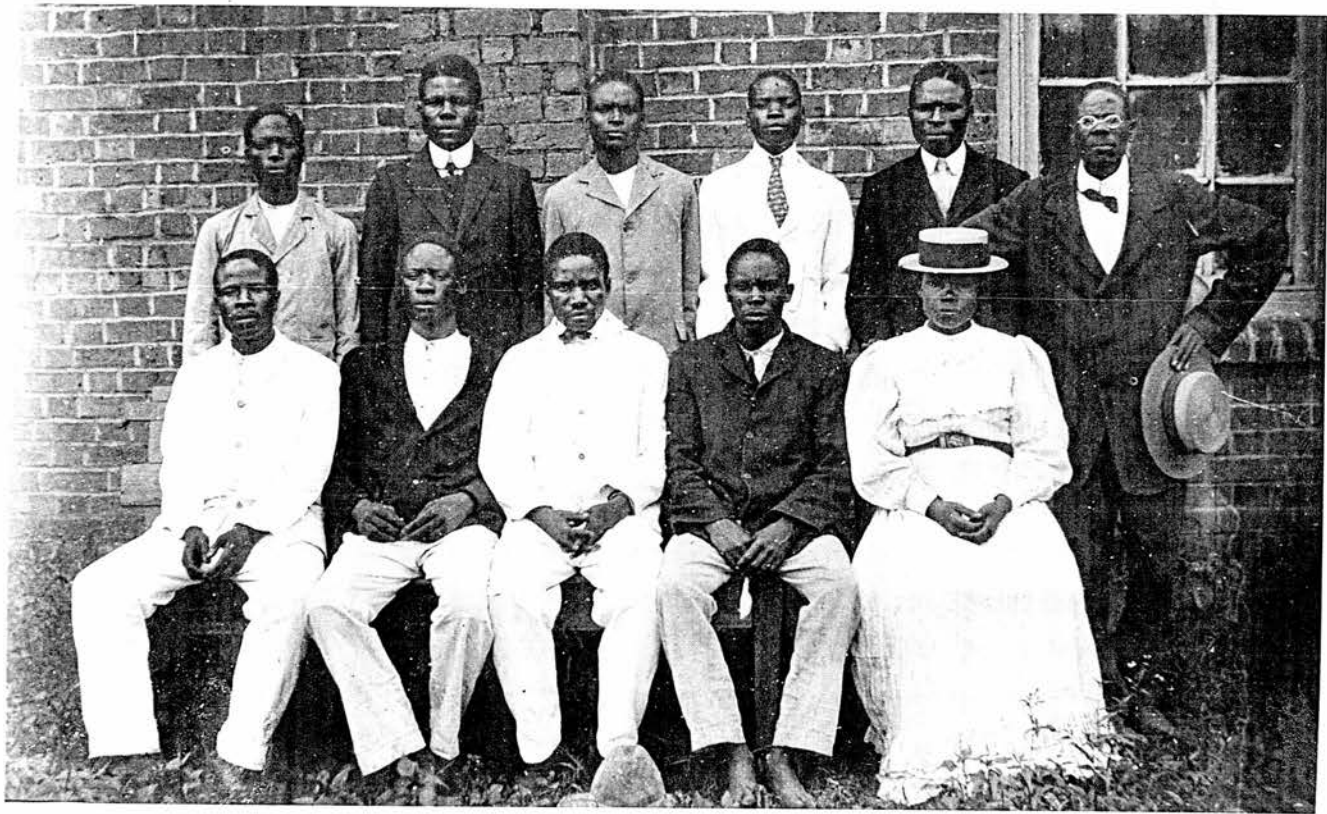


Plate 17. John Chilembwe's PIM group, probably taken after 1912. (Standing, left to right) Damson Bolowoza; Lee German Chimumbi; John Khawaza; Andraek Jamali (said to be Chilembwe's secretary during the Liberation Struggle of 1915) Wallace Kampingo; John Chilembwe. (Seated, left to right) Stephen Mkulich (killed in 1915); Douglas Mankhokwe; Wilson Kasitu (killed in 1915 with the Ntcheu section of the Freedom Army); Harrison Chehe; Mrs Ida J. Chilembwe.

Courtesy of Prof. Emeritus G A Shepperson

Nyassaland, Barotsiland and Matebeleland (now known as Rhodesia, North and South",<sup>111</sup> some issues highlighted nonetheless the threatening situation in South Africa. There certainly seemed to have been an effort made to show a linkage of the problems that existed in their regions. A few years later, when Booth wrote his memoirs, he recalled both these African deputations to England: "7 Native African friends of the writer were pleading in Britain for the King's veto on the oppressive Land laws of 1913 a most bitter and cruel kind".<sup>112</sup> Shepperson and Price observe that "Support from leading African politicians indicates how Booth in this period was attempting to work through the newly formed South African Native National Congress".<sup>113</sup> It is interesting also to note the Nyambo although from British Central Africa was later known to have served as chairman of the "Capetown Branch of the African National Congress".<sup>114</sup>

Another African nationalist worth our consideration with whom Booth associated and whom he influenced in the early days of missionary enterprise in Nyasaland was John Chilembwe, described in The Makers of Modern Africa as a "Malawian Clergyman, politician and anti-colonist hero".<sup>115</sup> That Chilembwe embraced Booth's philosophy of 'Africa for the African'<sup>116</sup> there is no doubt. For example, Hetherwick noted that he believed Chilembwe was "preaching a phase of what is known in South Africa as 'Ethiopianism' the doctrine of Africa for the African"<sup>117</sup> and in his opinion, "It had a distinct political bearing or object".<sup>118</sup> Contee affirms,

Ethiopianism has been viewed as forming a major portion of ingredients of the foundation for early African Nationalism. In separate African Churches, Africans did and could protest imperial rule

and build articulate leadership to oppose the domineering and discriminatory actions of the colonial officials.<sup>119</sup>

Indeed, Chilembwe like other 'Ethiopian' preachers, did not see the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular issues, a point so fundamental to the nineteenth century European thought. It is interesting to note that Shepperson and Price agree that "Chilembwe has an important place in the Ethiopianist pattern".<sup>120</sup> D.D. Phiri even goes so far as to point out that, "Towards the end of his life Chilembwe was so charged with nationalist and 'black power' sentiments that whenever he talked about salvation he had in mind as much freedom from foreign human domination as from the domination of Satan".<sup>121</sup>

The earliest occasion on which we hear of the Booth and Chilembwe association was when the latter came to ask for employment. Emily Langworthy, a daughter of Booth, seemed to recall their first encounter as she describes it:

On a scrap of paper he brought to Father a pencilled note. There could be no misunderstanding of either his hopes or his motives. 'Dear Mr Booth' the note read, 'You please carry me for God. I like to be your cook boy'. Thus did our dear black boy John come into our lives.<sup>122</sup>

There is little evidence that Chilembwe was ever affiliated to a particular denomination prior to the time he joined the Booth family. However, some accounts show that although it seems he was enrolled as a catechumen, he did not seek membership at Blantyre Mission. He was initiated into the Christian faith on 17 July 1893 through the Believer's baptism to which his mentor adhered. Soon after Chilembwe became an interpreter, a role that must have given him first hand knowledge of the plight of his people and of their grievances, as he travelled with

Booth from place to place, especially in the Southern part of Nyasaland. In 1895, Booth severed his connections with the ZIM, NIM and BIMS institutions which he had been instrumental in establishing, and in 1897 took Chilembwe with him to United States of America. Chilembwe returned to Nyasaland in 1899 after acquiring a two year ministerial training as a Baptist preacher.<sup>123</sup>

Donald Fraser, a United Free Church of Scotland missionary, informed the a Commission of Inquiry into the Rising that Chilembwe appeared to have started preaching Booth's doctrine 'Africa for the African' in 1910<sup>124</sup> in his church. However, the ideas of 'Africa for the African' which may have been enhanced by Chilembwe's presence among Black Americans were already in his mind through his association with Booth before both left the Protectorate. Shepperson and Price contend that hence his stay in America merely "strengthened but certainly did not create them".<sup>125</sup> Chilembwe's philosophy of 'Africa for the African' reflected very much Booth's own whose object was to rally and appeal to Africans to unite and work conjointly towards a religious, political, social, economic and spiritual liberation as opposed to doing nothing or remaining subservient to foreign institutions or agencies. James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore ascribe the origins of Nationalism and Pan Africanism to a number of leading figures among whom was John Chilembwe.<sup>126</sup> And hence Chilembwe's outspoken stance on local and national issues affecting his people in Nyasaland was vehemently considered as a major threat to the British interests in the colony. It may have been on such grounds that on 23 October 1914, B.T. Milthorp, an assistant Resident in Blantyre, proposed that Chilembwe "should be arrested and sent up to some outstation and remain there till the war was over, and also his special

teachers".<sup>127</sup> If such plans had been implemented, it would have meant Chilembwe joining Elliot Kamwana, who was already under house arrest, as a political prisoner.

However on 4 November 1914, Milthorp repeated his call that "If the Governor would allow it, it would be better to be on the safe side even if it is not legal".<sup>128</sup> Positive steps were then taken by the Government House to request "the Governor of Mauritius on 13th January as to the willingness of his Government to receive the deportees for us. A favourable reply was received on the 14",<sup>129</sup> however, the Governor revealed "but John Chilembwe had anticipated me".<sup>130</sup> It was the threat to have Chilembwe deported to Mauritius (note: his place was later taken by E. Kamwana) that seemed to turn him from his familiar manner of non-violent and legal protest to an armed struggle.<sup>131</sup> Following a consultation meeting with his henchmen as to how they should respond to the government's deportation orders, an agreement was reached to organize "a mass-based resistance movement against colonial domination".<sup>132</sup> It can certainly be argued that the over-reaction of the colonial authorities to Chilembwe was at the heart of the outbreak in the Protectorate. On the even of 23 January 1915 at about 9.00 pm, just before the struggle began, when marshalling his followers, Chilembwe is believed to have said:

Time has come at last to fight our oppressors. Many times we have asked for redress of grievances. Instead they have forced us to go out and fight their wars. As you have already been told they are busy now preparing to come here and attack us. Let us go out, and attack them first.

You are going out to fight as African Patriots, not just for Nyasaland but the whole of Africa; for the whole black race. Africa is one, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, remember this. Freedom is

the cry of Africa, of the Negro race.<sup>133</sup>

Chilembwe also gave strict orders that "the freedom fighters were not to plunder any white man's property except guns. They were not to steal his money either ... all they wanted was their land and freedom".<sup>134</sup> However, after putting up a formidable resistance against the colonial forces which led to a number of engagements, the movement was defeated.

A.M. Anderson, a Church of Scotland missionary who among many other witnesses testified before the Commission of Inquiry summed up the aim of the uprising as:

the acquiring by the natives led by John Chilembwe liberation from the Yoke - or supposed Yoke of foreign Government and foreign missions. [Chilembwe] learned also to use texts of scripture in supporting e.g. 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free' - making this freedom to refer not to the spiritual and moral but to the physical and material sphere.<sup>135</sup>

It must be emphasized however that in Chilembwe's view, the truth that sets people free particularly in a biblical sense, was indeed spiritual but neither was it devoid of political meaning. Booth's influence on this point was never much in doubt. The Chilembwe Commission when summing up its findings, stated, "If a more remote source is sought, it will be found in the machinations of Joseph Booth".<sup>136</sup> They further added, "Your Commissioners have not seen evidence to suggest that Joseph Booth was actually cognisant of the intended rising, but we have come to the conclusions that Booth's teaching sowed the seeds of racial animosity in the Protectorate, and that his correspondence with Chilembwe directly influenced the latter and others in rebelling against the Government",<sup>137</sup> and so contributed to the

Rising.

However, G. Smith, the Governor in charge at the time of the disturbances, acknowledged that Chilembwe's challenge to the colonial administration had opened up "a new phase in the existence of Nyasaland".<sup>138</sup> Sixty years later, Pachai in his book 'Malawi: the History of the Nation' agreed about the impact of Chilembwe:

After 1915 the shadow of Chilembwe was cast on the private estates, in the missions, in the Legislative Council chambers, in the relations between white and black. Though independence was yet a long way off, 1915 marked the end of the old era. What happened in 1953 and 1959 was a lengthening of this shadow and reinforcement of all that it stood for ... It was a real instrument of change, even if it was fifty years ahead of its time.<sup>139</sup>

Of Booth's influence on South Africans, Harry Langworthy argues that it "was doubtless marginal, although he was well regarded by Dube, Plaatje and D.D. Jabavu, entertained them in his home when they were in Cape Town, and no doubt advised them".<sup>140</sup> That is perhaps a conservative view. As we have seen, Booth had had some real influence in Natal. One should remember the close relationship that existed between Booth and Plaatje, the General Secretary of the South African Native National Congress<sup>141</sup> which cemented while both were in England between 1916 and 1917. It appears that it was Booth who introduced Plaatje to Dr Salter of Bermondsey, known to have been sympathetic to "Booth's African work and equal rights propaganda".<sup>142</sup> It was Salter who "gave a farewell reception for Plaatje and found £25 fare for his return"<sup>143</sup> at the end of his campaign in Britain against the Native Land Act of 1913.

Although by 1919 much of Booth's influence on African nationalists was considerably curtailed by his age, and to some extent also by frustration caused by the

MI5 surveillance on him, as noted in the subsequent chapter, he still made some attempt to aid the African cause. He sent the former High Commissioner of South Africa, Viscount Gladstone, the Native Appeal of 1914 for urgent consideration by the Privy Council that was to convene in London to address the land issue in the British territories.<sup>144</sup> He also attached an Appendix which covered the information regarding the Native Land Act of 1913, an issue about which Plaatje and other members of the African National Congress had vigorously protested.<sup>145</sup> It is worth noting that in that same year (1919), Plaatje led a delegation to London comprised of Mr R.V. Thema (Secretary), Rev. Henry Reed Ngcayiya (President of the Ethiopian Church) and two other members, Mr L.T. Mvabaza and Mr J.T. Gumede. This was the second black South African delegation since 1914. And unlike the previous deputation, which only met Mr Lewis Harcourt, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the 1919 party had an audience with the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, on 21st November 1919 at the House of Commons. It is not clear whether Booth and Plaatje were still in close touch at this time; however, it is interesting to note that most of the issues on the agenda for talks with the Prime Minister had also been raised by Booth on a number of occasions with British Government politicians. But, as previous successive British leaders had done, Lloyd George told the African delegation that he refused to commit himself, arguing:

But when you deal with a self-governing dominion [White South African government] I must follow the fixed practice of the Constitution and all I can do on behalf of the Imperial Government is to communicate with the Prime minister of the Cape the whole of the facts as they have been presented to me.<sup>146</sup>

Lloyd George later did send two despatches to Smuts in South Africa. In the first

one he noted, "I have confined myself to generalities in my official despatch".<sup>147</sup> But in his Private and Personal letter to him, he wrote, "the Black delegation was impressive compared to the deputation headed by General Hertzog",<sup>148</sup> and further added:

I am told that many of them have been going about the country lecturing at the Labour Party meetings and Brotherhood meetings, and that they have produced some effect. It was originally proposed that the Deputation should be introduced to me by Arthur Henderson, Secretary of the Labour Party, and Dr Clifford. I refused to agree to this because it looked like mixing up South African politics with British politics, but it shows they have been able to secure the sympathy of the people of power and influence.<sup>149</sup>

He seemed to caution Smuts against the policy of treating the colour question in what he termed "water-tight compartments".<sup>150</sup> Lloyd George alerted him to the growing world-wide black awareness and as an example referred to the emergence of 'the Black Star Line' and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Society and its supposed influence in New York.<sup>151</sup> And then he concluded:

You will observe that I made it clear that the question which they have raised were within the province of the Government of the Union and the Parliament of South Africa, and that the British Government, there [m] can take no action in regard to them.<sup>152</sup>

It must be stated that responses such as the one made by Lloyd George to Smuts were always considered by Booth and the African nationalists as a sell-out of Africans and the African cause to the White South Africans by the British Government. Booth argued that such remarks provided the White South Africans with a blank cheque to do what they deemed necessary to Africans, "while the Colonial officials, or Executive in Britain, disclaim responsibility or power of remedy".<sup>153</sup> It must be noted that more or less similar sentiments were echoed by Plaatje, who also

contended in summing up the issue of the Native Land Act in his book 'The Native Problem in South Africa':

The Imperial Government by the obligations of its overlordship and its plighted word to the Natives, at the time of the federation, is in duty bound to free the unrepresented Natives from the shackles of these laws, or otherwise, declare its guardianship of the interests of the Natives to have ceased, and counsel these weaker races to apply elsewhere for relief.<sup>154</sup>

Plaatje's prediction sounded prophetic, because later in the history of the 'South African Native National Congress' we see that the confidence it had in the British Government to help in resolving the South African problem began to wane and indeed, in the words of the African nationalist, 'relief' was being sought 'elsewhere'.

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- 65 Harry Langworthy, 'Charles Domingo: Seventh Day Baptists and Independency' Journal of Religion in Africa XV, 2 (1985), p.107.
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- 67 Joseph Booth, an article dated 21 June 1912, Sabbath Recorder. Harold Turner's Collection.
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- 76 S. Plaatje, Diamond Fields Advertiser, June 5, 1917.,
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- 84 Joseph Booth, 'The British Christian Union' May, 1913.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Ibid.
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- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Joseph Booth, 'The British Christian Union' May, 1913. op. cit.

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- 97 Ibid.
- 98 CO551/64 PRO, London, p.117.
- 99 Ibid., p.118.
- 100 Ibid., p.119
- 101 Ibid., p.111.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Ibid., p.117.
- 104 Ibid., p.436
- 105 Ibid., p.11.
- 106 Ibid.
- 107 Ibid., p.436.
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- 111 CO417/556 PRO, London. See also Appendix J<sub>1</sub>.
- 112 Ms C154/5-5p, p.10.
- 113 George Shepperson and Thomas Price. op. cit. p.203.
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Mr. P. Nyambo was born in Nyasaland, British Central Africa. Is a General Secretary of the African Universal Benefit Society, Capetown. Educated in London at S.D.A. College. Visited

Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Italy in 1906. Returned to Africa as a missionary in 1907. Author of a Native petition to the King in 1913. He joined the African deputation to England in 1914. Founded the Sister Nannie Rescue Home, Capetown, in 1922. Ex-Chairman Capetown Branch of the African National Congress.

- 115 Who's Who: Makers of Modern Africa (London, 1981), p.129.
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 Alexander Hetherwick IN Life and Work - The Church of Scotland Magazine and Mission Record (Edinburgh, 1915), p.220.
- 118 A. Hetherwick, giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO525/66, PRO, London, p.264.
- 119 Clarence G. Contee, 'The Emergenvce of DuBois as an African Nationalist' Journal of Negro History, vol. LIV, July 1969, p.50.
- 120 George Shepperson and Thomas Price, op. cit. p.425.
- 121 D.D. Phiri, Malawians to Remember: John Chilembwe (Lilongwe, 1976), p.32.
- 122 Shepperson and Price. op.cit. p.37.
- 123 Shepperson and Price. op.cit. p.113.
- 124 Donald Fraser, giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO525/66, PRO, London.
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- 126 Gayraud Wilmore and James Cone 'Black Theology and African Theology: Considerations for Dialogue, Critique and Integration' IN Gayraud Wilmore and James Cone [eds.] Black Theology, Documentary History, 1966-1979 (New York, 1979), p.464.
- 127 B.T. Milthorp, giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO525/66, PRO, London, p.231.
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- 130 Ibid.
- 131 D.D. Phiri, op. cit. p.63.
- 132 Who's Who: Makers of Modern Africa ... p.129.
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- 134 Ibid., pp.67-68.
- 135 A.M. Anderson, giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry, CO525/66, PRO, London, p.385.
- 136 Report of the Commission to Inquire into various matters and questions concerned with the Native Rising within The Nyasaland Protectorate, Zomba: (6819) 1915, p.4.
- 137 Ibid.
- 138 CO.525/61, PRO, London, p.142.
- 139 Bridglal Pachai, Malawi: The History of the Nation (London, 1973), p.224.
- 140 Harry Langworthy, 'Joseph Booth, Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa, 1891-1915' Journal of Religion in Africa XVI, 1 (1986), p.40.
- 141 See A letter from Plaatje to Booth, 8 July 1916. Made available to me by Prof. Shepperson.
- 142 Harry Langworthy, 'Booth in Exile 1915-1919'. Manuscript of Booth's Biography - unpublished. p.23.
- 143 Ibid.
- 144 A letter from Joseph Booth to Viscount Gladstone, 11 July 1919, CO.417/556, PRO, London.
- 145 Ibid.
- 146 CO.537/1197, PRO, London, p.14. (Members of the black South African Deputation meet Lloyd George).
- 147 A letter from Lloyd George to J.C. Smuts, 7 January 1920. CO.537/1197, PRO, London.
- 148 Ibid.

- 149 Ibid.
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 A letter from D. Lloyd George to J.C. Smuts 3 March 1920. CO537/1197, PRO, London.
- 153 Native Appeal of 1914 CO.417/556, PRO, London, p.3.
- 154 Sol. T. Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa (London), p.344.

## CHAPTER VIII

### **BOOTH AND MI5: THE ISSUE OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM, LIBERTY AND EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE DEFENCE OF THE REALM ACT, 1914, REGULATION 14B**

#### **A CASE STUDY**

On the 7th of December 1916, John Pedder, a Principal Assistant Secretary in the Home Office, wrote in reply to a letter from a Mr H.J. Read, his counterpart in the Colonial Office:

With reference to your letter of 14 ultimo, 48172/1916, in the case of Joseph Booth, I am directed by Mr Secretary Samuel to say that he has communicated with the War Office (M.15) [sic] and that Department is taking the necessary steps to watch Mr Booth's correspondence and activities, in order that it may be decided whether there is any ground for taking action against him. e.g. Under the Defence of the Realm Regulation, 14b.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Samuel, the Home Secretary, took Booth so seriously that he deemed it necessary to refer his case to "Britain's premier counter-intelligence organization, the Security Service, known as 'The Imperial Security Intelligence Service', and now more widely referred to by its military intelligence 'cover' designation of MI5"<sup>2</sup> Although Harry Langworthy concedes that "It is impossible to determine what action MI5 took or what was reported to the Home Office as relevant files are closed for one hundred years",<sup>3</sup> this aspect of Booth's political life still deserves serious treatment. This Chapter will therefore attempt to ascertain the possible reasons or causes that may have led to the intervention of MI5 during this period of Booth's career and the

implications it had for his pro-African stance.

At the beginning we find that it was the Governor of Nyasaland who raised Booth's name with the British Government. His despatch to London marked 'SECRET' and dated 28th August, 1916, was designed to alert the Secretary of State for the Colonies concerning Booth's alleged seditious correspondence with Africans. He noted, "It would appear from correspondence recently intercepted here that Booth may still be in communication with natives of this country [Nyasaland]".<sup>4</sup> Booth was in Britain at this time unaware of such an action which followed on his deportation from South Africa by the Union Government on 2nd October, 1915 which was also at the instigation of the Nyasaland Governor.

However, it seems before Booth's departure from South Africa he had sent Charles Domingo a copy of the manifesto of his new Association, the British African Congress, which he had inaugurated on 4th July, 1915 in Basutoland. It must be borne in mind that, with Elliot Kamwana under house arrest at Fort Anderson in Mulanje, followed by the tragic death or disappearance of the African nationalist and anti-colonialist hero, John Chilembwe, Charles Domingo was the only remaining protégé of Booth in Nyasaland whose membership he could solicit for the British African Congress. However, possibly in view of this, Domingo was also being closely watched by the Colonial authorities in the Protectorate. "Early in 1916, when Domingo wrote to Booth enthusiastically supporting the appeal, the Nyasaland authorities intercepted the letter".<sup>5</sup> The Governor informed the Secretary of State

for the Colonies:

I enclose a copy of a printed memorial or appeal which was prepared by him [Booth] in Basutoland in July, 1915. The receipt at foot, a copy of which I attach, signed by Charles Domingo, was stopped in the post, and the memorial from which it was detached was found among this native's papers.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequent to this seizure, the Governor further investigated "in the various Districts to ascertain if other copies had been circulated, but so far without success".<sup>7</sup> He nonetheless took the whole matter seriously, as he felt the manifesto seized had not only "been mostly carefully prepared in its terms"<sup>8</sup>, but also, "It breathes sedition".<sup>9</sup> Smith felt that to an African of Domingo's calibre "with his knowledge of English and intimate acquaintance with Booth personally and with his methods and objects",<sup>10</sup> he argued, "the appeal would be appreciated to the full extent in its intention, and by word of mouth, in his capacity as a preacher and teacher, he could doubtless incite many to acts of open rebellion".<sup>11</sup> The Governor acknowledged that the Appeal had no doubt been brought already to the attention of the Colonial Officials in London<sup>12</sup>, and envisaged that criminal proceedings might possibly already been underway against Booth. However, he stressed that:

Apart from such proceedings I would suggest the advisability of this man [Booth] being kept under observation, for although removed from Africa, he can still exercise unquestionably a powerful influence for mischief among the many followers he has had in the past, who are still in sympathy with his objects and the means he would adopt for attaining them.<sup>13</sup>

There were two things worth mentioning that G. Smith had discerned from Booth's correspondence and cited in the confidential despatch to the Colonial Office

in London which, in his view, justified his seeing Joseph Booth as a threat to British rule in Africa. The first was the British African Congress Appeal sent to Domingo, which we have already identified. The second was Booth's close connection with the John Chilembwe Rising in Nyasaland, which we can see still troubled the Governor as can be seen by his reference to "Booth's enquiry of John Chilembwe in his letter of the 29th July, 1914, (a copy of which accompanied my secret despatch of the 29th May, 1915) as to the strength of the Police (Askari) and troops in Nyasaland",<sup>14</sup> to which the Governor commented that it was "not without its significance".<sup>15</sup> Both these confirmed, in the Governor's view, how dangerous Booth was. These were entirely political matters and not missionary at all from the Governor's perspective and he felt they surely were in breach of the Defence of the Realm Regulation, 14b? This point will also be dealt with later.

The initial reaction to the Governor's letter is worth noting. Bottomley, Butler and Davis, officers in the Colonial Office who, among others, addressed the issue of Booth in the Governor's despatch, were clear that the manifesto was not something new to them. In the Colonial Office minutes jointly drafted by them, they state: "We had already had the manifesto before us - see 44103/15, 49534/15 & 50329/15".<sup>16</sup> They further confirmed: "The manifesto was written in Basutoland and the copy seized in Nyasaland was no doubt introduced from there".<sup>17</sup> They know, "Booth is now in England and believed to be under Police Supervision".<sup>18</sup> However, in view of the censorship measures that had already been taken and were still in operation both in Nyasaland and Britain, they felt Booth was no longer in a position either to send

openly or even smuggle, anything subversive into the Protectorate.

Although the Colonial Office felt "the introduction of such matter among the natives of Nyasaland is of course very serious, as the Gov. points out",<sup>19</sup> they nonetheless conceded that "it seems impossible to bring a criminal prosecution against Booth for writing such a manifesto if only for the reason that he openly sent us a copy a year ago and we did nothing".<sup>20</sup> There is no doubt that the Colonial Office found itself in an extremely embarrassing position. Whether they wanted to charge Booth as the Governor demanded or not, they could not act because they had done nothing at all on receiving the manifesto from Booth himself the year before. However, a certain member of staff in the Colonial Office felt that, in his opinion, "He [Booth] is near the prosecution point".<sup>21</sup> And possibly he may have influenced others such as Bottomley, Butler and Davis to make the following recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to contact the Home Office "and ask whether they agree"<sup>22</sup> as follows:

(a) that Booth is comparatively harmless where he is at present as regard disseminating literature etc. to Nyasaland.

(b) that he will not now be prosecuted for the authorship of the pamphlet forwarded by the Governor. They should also be asked to state whether they have any knowledge of intercourse on the part of Booth since his arrival in England with bodies like the Watch Tower Society, and we should emphasize the importance of his being carefully watched".<sup>23</sup>

They were sceptical of branding Booth as the sole person responsible for circulating the British African Congress Appeal among the Africans as the Governor had suggested. Hence they seem to exonerate him by inferring that the

"dissemination is probably not carried out by him, but by the Watch Tower and other similar societies in various places".<sup>24</sup> It must be pointed out that the Governor also revealed he found "One copy was produced by Mr J.A. Day of the Nyasa Industrial Mission at Cholo, who stated that he had received it from Booth sometime ago".<sup>25</sup>

And also added:

The fact however, that Mr Day received this seditious and inciting memorial after the rising and had it in his possession at the time of the Enquiry, but failed to draw the attention of Government to the matter, will no doubt impress you, as it does me, unfavourably towards this Mission, its bona fides, and the reliance Government may repose in it as a means of checking this pernicious propaganda of Ethiopianism.<sup>26</sup>

The above statement was sufficient cause for the Colonial Officials in London to bring to the attention of the Home Office to "note what is said in this despatch about Mr Day of the Nyasa Industrial Mission".<sup>27</sup> Ironically, although Booth had severed his links with the mission, he gave as his address in England where receipts of acknowledgement for the British African Congress manifesto as "& C/o Secretary, Nyasa Industrial Mission, Sevenoaks, Kent, England".<sup>28</sup> This made the Nyasa Industrial Mission become even more a suspect in government eyes.

As pertaining to Domingo, the Colonial Office instantly approved the measures taken by the Governor who in his confidential despatch stated:

I had decided to take steps for his detention under Ordinance No.1 of 1909 when he applied for permission to leave the Protectorate and return to Quilimane, which, in the circumstances, I considered it expedient to accede to, and he left Nyasaland on the 9th Instant. The proceedings for issue of an order for his political detention will be completed, and steps will be taken to prevent his re-entry into the country.<sup>29</sup>

However, as regards the response to the Governor's despatch concerning Booth's position on his British African Congress manifesto the Colonial Office felt "what should be said to Governor will depend upon Home Office reply".<sup>30</sup> And, therefore, based on that premise, it seems that an official in the Colonial Office, Mr Read, wrote on 14th November, 1916, on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Bonar Law:

I am directed by Mr Secretary Bonar Law to transmit to you to be laid before Mr Secretary Samuel, a copy of a despatch, with its enclosures, from the Governor of Nyasaland relating to the activities of Joseph Booth.<sup>31</sup>

In his letter Mr Read confirmed that "Mr Bonar Law received from Joseph Booth direct a year ago a copy of the printed memorial dated 4th July, 1915, and he did not at the time think it necessary or desirable to take any action upon it."<sup>32</sup> His reason was "He had not then considered the possibility of the memorial being circulated amongst natives in British territory or in British protectorates".<sup>33</sup> He then seems to imply that at the time he did not consider it as dangerous but now that it was being circulated among Africans it may be seen as posing a serious threat. The letter stated, "The circulation of such matter among natives may clearly have serious consequences".<sup>34</sup> However, in view of the fact that nothing had been done before, he thought it was "not practicable to bring a criminal prosecution against Booth for publishing a memorial of this kind",<sup>35</sup> but rather felt "it is very necessary to consider how the dissemination of it can be checked".<sup>36</sup> Mr Bonar Law expressed and reiterated most of the suggestions given to him by his advisers, as these notes show:

Mr Bonar Law would be glad to know whether, in Mr Samuel's opinion, it is now impossible to prosecute Booth for the publication of

the memorial, and whether the police supervision which can be applied to Booth in this country renders him comparatively harmless for the dissemination of the memorial and similar literature amongst natives in the British African Territories. I am also to enquire whether the Police have any knowledge of intercourse on the part of Booth since his arrival in England with bodies like the Watch Tower Society. In any case, it will no doubt be agreed that it is most important that a close watch should be kept upon him in future.<sup>37</sup>

Strangely, the letter concluded by failing to distinguish between Elliot Kamwana and John Chilembwe. The latter was described wrongly as:

a native, trained in South Africa as a missionary, belonging to the Watch Tower Society, who returned to Nyasaland and was eventually the instigator of the native rising which took place in that Protectorate in January of last year.<sup>38</sup>

After the Home Secretary had deliberated on the points raised by the Colonial Office, let alone the Governor's despatch, he seemed persuaded to refer the matter not to the Police (CID) section but to an even more sophisticated organisation, the War Office's own department, MI5. This may well indicate the grave danger they considered Booth might pose to the Defence of the Realm. It was then that the Principal Assistant Secretary in the Home Office, John Pedder, replied to the letter of Mr Read, of the Colonial Office, informing him that the Home Secretary had:

communicated with the War Office (M15) [sic] and that Department<sup>39</sup> was taking the necessary measures to monitor "Mr Booth's correspondence and activities, in order that it may be decided whether there is any ground for taking action against him. e.g. Under the Defence of the Realm Regulation, 14b".<sup>40</sup>

It is important to emphasize that whatever information was communicated to the MI5 by the Home Office must have been based on the Governor's despatch and the

Colonial Office's briefing as already stated before. Nigel West, in his book MI5: British Security Service Operation 1909-1945 gives a possible hint as to how the Home Office may have communicated with the War Office. He states that under "the rule on codes. All communications with MI5 headquarters were to be sent by telegram in code, however prosaic the contents";<sup>41</sup> and he further reveals, "Although officially a department of the War Office, and answerable to the Secretary of state for War, MI5 achieved independent status, with direct access to the Home Secretary and Prime minister, shortly after the Great War".<sup>42</sup> However, one interesting insight this strange episode in Booth's life provides is that this 'direct access' which the Home Secretary gained to MI5, may already have been in operation as early as the beginning of the war.

Before we consider the British African Congress Appeal and also the contents of Booth's letter to Chilembwe, it is appropriate for us to define what the Defence of the Realm Act, 1914 and its Regulation 14b entailed. It is significant to mention first that the Bill that was drafted and passed through Parliament for the legislation of the Defence of the Realm Act was, it seems, done very hurriedly. The possible reason for this was the need on the part of the Government to pass laws that would meet certain conditions during the First World War. And hence on 8th August, 1914, Parliament passed "An Act to confer on His Majesty in Council power to make Regulations during the present War for the Defence of the Realm".<sup>43</sup> It noted:

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this Present Parliament assembled, and by the authority

of the same, as follows:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Power to<br>make<br>Regulations | <p>1. His Majesty in Council has power during the continuance of the present war to issue regulations as to the powers and duties of the Admiralty and Army Council, and of the members of His Majesty's forces, and other persons acting in His behalf, securing the public safety and the defence of the realm; and may, by such regulations, authorise the trial by courts martial and punishment of persons contravening any of the provisions of such regulations designed -</p> <p>(a) to prevent persons communicating with the enemy or obtaining information for that purpose or any purpose calculated to jeopardise the success of the operations of any of His Majesty's forces or to assist the enemy; or</p> <p>(b) to secure the safety of any means of communication, of railways, docks or harbours</p> <p>in like manner as if such persons were subject to military law and had on active service committed an offence under section five of the Army Act.</p> |
| Short<br>title                  | <p>2. This Act may be cited as the Defence of the Realm Act, 1914.<sup>44</sup></p>   |

And approximately four days later, based on the provision of the Act, 'The King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council' at the Court at Buckingham Palace noted:

Where as by the Defence of the Realm Act; 1914, His Majesty has power during the continuance of the present war to issue Regulations for securing the public safety and the defence of the Realm subject to and in accordance with that Act:

Now therefore, His Majesty is pleased, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:-"<sup>45</sup>

At that point Regulations were formulated and subdivided into two sections. PART I comprised General Regulations while PART II contained "Regulations specially designed to prevent persons communicating with the enemy and obtaining information for disloyal purposes, and to secure the safety of means of communication and

railways, docks and harbours".<sup>46</sup> There were about thirty regulations in all. However, the regulation cited by the Home Office as the Defence of the Realm Regulation 14b and which was associated with the criminal prosecution of Booth, stipulated that:

14. No person shall without lawful authority publish or communicate any information with respect to the movement or disposition of any of the forces, ships, or war materials of His Majesty or Any of His Majesty's allies, or with respect to plans of any naval or military operations by any such forces or ships, or with respect to any works or measures undertaken for connected with the fortification or defence of any place, if the information is such as is calculated to be or might be directly or indirectly useful to the enemy.<sup>47</sup>

And if anyone breached such rules, he was liable to face Court Martial as the statement noted: "Any person contravening any of the provisions of the foregoing special Regulations shall be liable to be tried by Court Martial and to be sentenced to penal servitude for life or any less punishment".<sup>48</sup> The Home Secretary, after endorsing the circular bearing the Defence of the Realm Regulations, went on to issue it to all Chief Constables with copies also sent with covering letters to "Commissioner of Metropolitan and City Police, Scottish Office and Irish Government (250 copies), War Office and Admiralty".<sup>49</sup>

**BOOTH'S BRITISH AFRICAN CONGRESS MANIFESTO -  
IN BREACH OF THE DEFENCE OF THE REALM REGULATION 14B?**

The British African Congress manifesto, is in keeping with Booth's previous appeals except for a few changes, seems to bear many of the hallmarks of Booth's 1899 Appeal. Indeed, it seems almost to be a replica of the May 1914 Native

Appeal, in the formulation of which Booth was the major author. The latter Appeal addressed "TO HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE THE FIFTH OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, together with His Ministers, Executive Officers and Council, AS ALSO to all Honorable God-fearing persons in Great Britain and Ireland",<sup>50</sup> was taken by Booth's protégé, Nyambo, for presentation in Britain. It had not resulted in any prosecution. Why then was the manifesto of the British African Congress deemed to be seditious?

It is important to point out that Booth started his Appeal by setting forth an argument that in his opinion the people of the British Empire were now in "the midst of a deadly struggle with certain other powers in an endeavour to preserve National Independence, with personal liberty and equal political rights for the white members of the said Empire".<sup>51</sup> And also, "all the Military and naval forces throughout Britain and British Dominions, are with constantly increasing necessary, exhaustiveness and devotion being engaged or requisitioned for the furious struggle in Europe now prevailing".<sup>52</sup> While Booth did not oppose such a show of patriotism, he nonetheless seemed alarmed at what he saw as double standards when it came to Britain's treatment of other races, among her own subjects. Booth observed in this Appeal:

It is manifest, beyond dispute, that those who so fight for, and cheerfully bestow life and wealth to retain the liberty and equality they count so sacred, must either be equally ready to cheerfully bestow freedom in the same degree upon all their fellow subjects, of whatever race, or be themselves unworthy to retain the rights and liberties they at present enjoy and so valiantly defend.<sup>53</sup>

And indeed, what Booth insisted was even more of a puzzle was that Britain was

engaged in a war it felt justified because it involved the defence of 'National Independence' and 'liberty', yet when African nationalists demanded the same privileges through peaceful constitutional means, Britain was in the forefront each time to thwart any such proposals. Booth did not mince his words. He was quickly to cite an example with which he was very familiar when he noted:

Certain Native Appeals and petitions have been made, and deputations sent, unsuccessfully, to His Majesty King George the Fifth, and to His Government as well as to the electors and people of Great Britain, during the summers of the years 1913 and 1914 respectively pleading for the equal political status, regardless of race or creed, solemnly promised by various Proclamations of Her Most Just and Excellent Majesty, Queen Victoria, which assurances have been notably ignored by Her Successors in power, and by the Governments and Legislative Councils of the various sections of British Africa, as also by the South African Union Government from the period of such Proclamations to the present year of 1915, A.D.<sup>54</sup>

Then Booth went on to reiterate the issues he had raised in the Native Appeal regarding Britain's annexation policy, which in his view was wrapped up in "philanthropic, commercial and other grounds".<sup>55</sup> And yet in the end Britain treated "the right of the Native ownership throughout these vast and valuable regions as extinguished, or of negligible importance, and without giving any appreciable pledge as to the future political status of the numerous Native owners found in the possession thereof".<sup>56</sup> Booth further cited the situation in South Africa where "within and without the Union House of Assembly"<sup>57</sup> there was a deliberate move to "advocate a policy of making all Africa, south of the Zambezi parallel a 'White man's country'"<sup>58</sup> and observed that such plans,

accompanied by alarming and forceful segregation proposals on a scale dangerous to peace and progress; suggestive of decimation and possible extermination of such natives as dare to seriously object to such

arbitrary and threatening operations: at the same time studiously keeping the Native and colored peoples utterly defenceless and undisciplined, in sharp contrast to the compulsory military training of the white race.<sup>59</sup>

He was critical as he noted the "huge sections of the African's land in both Western and Eastern Africa, hitherto for a period, dominated by German rule, are in process of annexation and absorption by the Imperial and South African Governments".<sup>60</sup> And as yet there was demonstrated no sign of "any visible assurance as to the rights, liberties or ownership of the aboriginal Natives therein located being recognised".<sup>61</sup> Booth further referred to the way in which the Belgians also had appropriated a great portion of Central Africa "styled the Congo Free State" and treated Africans atrociously. Yet the British Government guaranteed "the integrity of the Belgian nation".<sup>62</sup> And so in the British African Congress Appeal, Booth demanded that Britain show its moral obligation "for the Natives of the Congo State, as early as may be possible, the same rights, liberties, protection and enlightenment as are herein defined for Natives residing in the various sections of British Africa proper".<sup>63</sup> This demonstrates how far-reaching Booth's reforms were designed to be: as seen here, they were certainly far beyond the British spectrum. In the penultimate clause of his manifesto, he drew the attention of the readers to the need "to live in a state of peace and goodwill",<sup>64</sup> as he "previously stated in the Rhodesia-Nyasaland appeal of May, 1914".<sup>65</sup> And 'WHEREFORE' he concluded with the following appeal:

It is hereby expressly declared and urgently requested, by those concerned, that the present authorities throughout all British Dominions will take such immediate and decisive steps as will ensure the preservation of the land and liberties, as well as the speedy uplifting and education, on an equal basis with British or other European settlers, of the entire Native population and that to this end all the

revenue derived from each and every British African territory, inclusive of the South African Union, from any and every source, shall be administered in equal amounts for the educational, political, and other benefits of Natives and Europeans alike; and that educated Natives, as they become available in any part of British Africa, shall have equality or representation in the respective Legislative Assemblies or Councils, and be fully eligible for official posts of trust administrative, financial, military, naval and otherwise, subject to the same tests of fitness as those applied to British and Dutch officials or other civil servants; and that in purely native, or unadvanced districts, Native Advisory Councils shall be established for the purpose of promoting harmonious co-operation between native peoples and their Administrators in all matter relating to the peace, progress and mutual well-being of Native or white residents.<sup>66</sup>

It must be said that the above declaration was similar to the one Booth used to sum up the Native Appeal of May, 1914.

An interesting feature to note is the manner in which some African nationalists reacted, or rather, responded to Booth's British African Congress manifesto. Langworthy informs us that that indeed Booth "was invited to the South African Native Congress [ANC] meetings, in 1912 in Capetown, in mid-1914 in Bloemfontein, and at Kroonstaad in 1915, where he presented his British African Congress Appeal",<sup>67</sup> but is unsure about what happened "It is not known whether it was accepted or even debated".<sup>68</sup> But Booth himself affirmed that his manifesto was an "approved Declaration submitted to the Native African Congress both at Bloemfontein in 1914 and at Kroonstaad O.F.S. in 1915 first before the time of the writer's expulsion from Africa".<sup>69</sup> And indeed, in one of the British African Congress Pamphlets he inscribed "Approved by the African Native National Congress at Kroonstaad O.F.S. 1915".<sup>70</sup> Moreover, judging from the commendation given by Solomon Plaatje, General

Secretary of the 'African Native National Congress', concerning the British African Congress Appeal, there is no doubt most members of the Congress meetings must have approved of it. Plaatje wrote to Booth in 1916:

I have read the Preamble and plan of your Association, formed at Johannesburg, while I was here (in England), and I find it accurately represents the aspirations of the Africans. We claim no monopoly of any part of Africa, and while others are warring for 'a place in the Sun', our only prayer is that in our own Continent of Africa the British Government should treat us as well as the Foreigner. Surely no unprejudiced reasoner could misconstrue this into a desire to usurp other people's prerogatives.<sup>71</sup>

Plaatje then mentioned also sending to Booth a copy of his book Native Life in South Africa, in which he had vigorously argued against the Native Land Act of June 1913. And he further told Booth, it "as you know, does not represent your Continent-wide experience. It only deals with the conditions in that huge Black Man's prison, which is officially and diplomatically styled 'the Union' of South Africa, &c."<sup>72</sup>

Another African Nationalist to throw his weight behind the manifesto in approval was Charles Domingo, the man at the centre of the row which caused Booth to come under the surveillance of MI5. In the covering letter that was enclosed with the receipt from Domingo to Booth declared that the Appeal seemed like "the commencement of the new heaven - earth".<sup>73</sup> And Domingo went on to say that if "such a declaration should be carried out ... what a great emancipation; than [then] peace and love would reign in our hearts".<sup>74</sup> However, such an endorsement and such comments from a Nyasaland African was a danger signal in the eyes of senior Nyasaland officials and Government House. Hence Domingo was seen by the



Plate 18. The South African Native National Congress [ANC] delegation to England, June 1914, to present the Native Land Act of 1913. (from left to right) Thomas Mapikela; Rev. Walter Rubusana, Rev. John Dube (President); Saul Msane and Solomon Plaatje.

Courtesy - Brian Willan

authorities as an agitator like Booth, if not his actual accomplice. It must be remembered that the Governor of Nyasaland had also linked the Appeal to Booth's letter to Chilembwe written on 29th July 1914 from Beaumont Villa, Capetown. Booth wrote to Chilembwe that he was "still working and planning for the Welfare and equal freedom of natives from here to lake Tanganika [sic]".<sup>75</sup> But then he added, "If my people [The British or the white race] do not give the terms asked for in the enclosed, it will, I expect, come another way".<sup>76</sup> One may well pause to ask in what other way did Booth envisage the terms would be met, apart from the peaceful means Africans were patiently pursuing? It must be stated that the conditions referred to as enclosed in his letter to Chilembwe were either the Native Appeal of May, 1914 or possibly a draft of the British African Congress, on which he may still have been working. On 25th July, 1914, Booth noted in his 'MIZPAH' diary regarding an invitation he had received to attend a 'Native Congress - Bloemfontein',<sup>77</sup> most likely from J.L. Dube, its president, with whom he had a good relationship. And hence, he told Chilembwe:

Today I am going by invitation to a great native National Congress of all chiefs and headmen and other leaders at Bloemfontein far from here. A clever deputation of 5 South Af. leaders, who have been some months in England - also Peter Nyambo of Chioli and another - are returning and it will be decided what next to do.<sup>78</sup>

It must be remembered that the five-man black South African National congress delegation Booth refers to was comprised of J.L. Dube (President), Dr Walter B. Rubusana, Saul Msane, Thos U. Mapikela, and Sol. T. Plaatje (General Secretary). They had been to Britain to present an Appeal against the 1913 Native Land Act.<sup>79</sup> And coming back about the same time, Booth thought, were Nyambo and possibly



Plate 19. Peter Nyambo in London (1906) and South Africa respectively. He carried the Native Petition to England in 1914 - See Appendix J<sub>1</sub>

Courtesy - G.A. Shepperson and T.D. Mweli Skota

Kanduna<sup>80</sup> who carried the Native Appeal of May, 1914, to present to the King and the British Government on behalf of "the natives of Nyasaland, Barotseland and Matebeleland (now known as Rhodesia, North and South)".<sup>81</sup>

This proves again how the blacks from South Africa, especially the African National Congress and those from British Central Africa, shared the same ideals and at times held meetings together, influenced to a certain extent by Booth. However, both delegations were back after having suffered much disappointment by the very cold reception in Britain of their Appeals. But it is rather unlikely that Nyambo ever did attend the proposed Bloemfontein Congress; Kanduna may possibly have been the only delegate. For Booth noted on a 'Native Petition to the King' Appeal that "Peter is still in England with this. Harcourt, Colonial Secretary has acknowledged it favourably. Peter stays at Matlock: went on May 17th 1914".<sup>82</sup> It seems possible that at the last meeting plans had been changed. However, as regards the invitation given to Booth to attend the Native National Congress, it is not clear what agenda he was briefed on by his African host(s). What seems to emerge from his letter to Chilembwe clearly suggests it was intended to be a crucial meeting, because the delegates, according to Booth, who comprised Chiefs and other political black leaders, were to discuss and reach a decision on "what next to do".<sup>83</sup> Plaatje somehow does provide a clue to what the Bloemfontein Conference agenda partly entailed. He recalled:

At the beginning of August, a special meeting of the South African Native Congress was called at Bloemfontein, first to express its disappointment at the cold reception given to the native deputation by

the Imperial Government; and secondly, to express its thanks to the British public for the kind reception given to the deputation; and thirdly, to devise ways and means for the deputation to tour the United Kingdom on a mission, revealing to the British people the manner in which to the Colonial Government discharges its trust to the coloured people.<sup>84</sup>

However, through Booth one gets the impression that Black leaders were becoming increasingly frustrated because all their requests were being rebuffed. After all, in 1909-1910 the delegates from the Cape Colony who were objecting to the Constitution of the planned Union of South Africa had been very coldly received in London. Now again in 1914, when the 1913 Land Act of the Union Government had confirmed all their worst forebodings in 1909, they again received little sympathy from the Government in London.

Booth was a staunch pacifist and would certainly not have encouraged any suggestion of violence. It does seem, however, that he had come to believe it was a possible threat. What gives further credence to the opinion that such moves were being at least tentatively discussed is what I believe led to his request to Chilembwe to furnish him with military logistical information concerning Nyasaland, in case such was needed. He asked Chilembwe, "Do you know how many Askari in Nyasaland and how many Regiments?"<sup>85</sup> And to show he needed the reply before the Congress convened, he instructed Chilembwe to "Reply as per envelope herewith".<sup>86</sup> It is very unlikely Chilembwe furnished Booth with the information he asked for and neither, it seems, was the military option discussed at such a length as to cause him to write

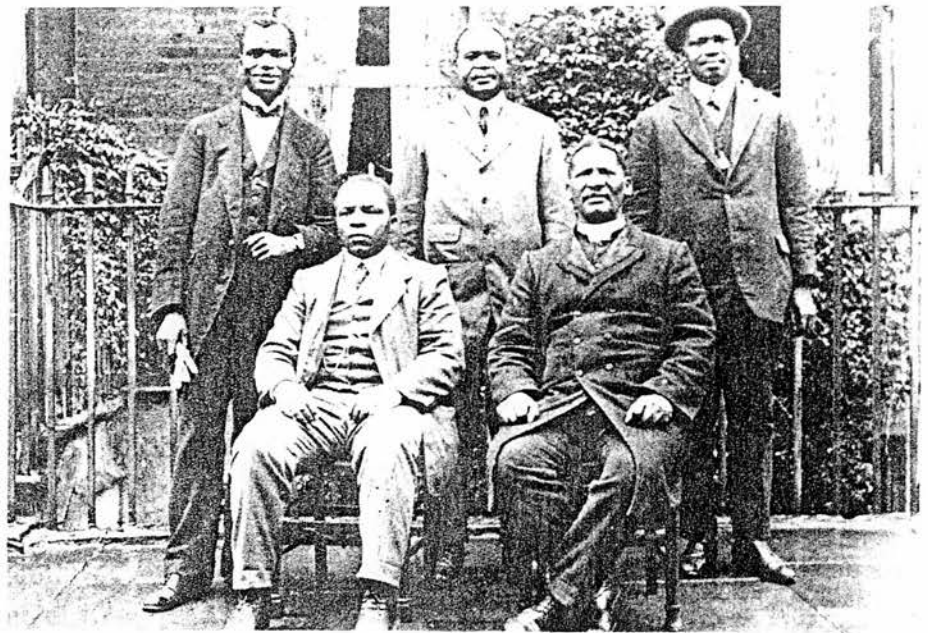


Plate 20. The South African Native National Congress delegation to England in 1919 to present the whole range of issues concerning the South African problem. (Top row, left to right) R.V. Selope Thema; J.T. Gumede, L.T. Mvabaza. (Bottom row, left to right) S.T. Plaatje and Rev. H.R. Ngcayiya. See Appendices H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>.

Courtesy - Brian Willan

its details on paper. "After attending the Bloemfontein Congress - 8th August 1914",<sup>87</sup> Booth simply noted in his diary, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath appointed me to preach good tidings ...: He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the captives - Isaiah 61:1".<sup>88</sup> It must be stressed that the temptation for Africans also to resort to armed struggle was a concern constantly on his mind, especially as he saw the white dominated army in South Africa coupled with the South Africa Government's intransigence with regard to African problems.

As early as 1913, he was at pains to contemplate the inevitable, if black people were to employ the same methods which whites adopted. In his British Christian Union of February, 1913, he observed:

The African's testing-time has also come. It is painful to contemplate what the Natives could do from the Equator to the Cape and from Abyssinia to the Equator, if terrorism and readiness to shed blood were the sure way to progress, as so many Europeans seem to think.<sup>89</sup>

Time was running out! However, Booth noted that Africans pursued a 'more excellent way' of "peaceful progression, patient working and waiting ... contrasting strangely with the love of military barbarism in most white races".<sup>90</sup> Again and again Booth uses the comparison of whites and Africans to the disadvantage of the whites. What terrible disasters would ensure if Africans behaved in the barbaric way whites were now behaving! He wrote:

There can be no deserved or lasting victory for the British and their Belgian and French allies, until these partners in the disposition of Africa are willing to bestow, on equal terms, the same degree of liberty, protection and enlightenment for which they themselves so justly and resolutely contend.

Native Africans, as well as their European and American friends, do not like to contemplate, what, at this period, a forceful and extensive effort to obtain either equality or independence on African soil occupied by the British, Belgian and French allies, might mean to both races, if similar sanguinary methods were adopted to secure the reasonable rights and liberties herein advocated and sought by peaceful appeal".<sup>91</sup>

This did not fail to anger the Governor of Nyasaland, especially the second paragraph. Particularly the words "sanguinary methods" seemed highly dangerous to the Governor who told the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

When the forces of all parts of the empire are being withdrawn for the 'deadly struggle' with the Central Power of Europe, is a propitious one for the natives of Africa to seek to recover by 'sanguinary methods' if necessary, their possession of the land and all rights and liberties of which they have been deprived under white rule.<sup>92</sup>

It must be stressed that at no time did Booth state that Africans had now adopted 'sanguinary methods', as G. Smith seems to imply. But, as pointed out before, he expressed his fear of the Africans' problems not being acknowledged and attempts made to have them resolved in the most amicable way. However, the Governor of Nyasaland may have considered both the manifesto and Booth's letter to Chilembwe as a threat, because of their military undertones, or that Booth was contemplating such action by influencing African nationalism.

Booth had been closely watched by the Police in South Africa, especially after the 'Native Uprising' in Nyasaland. Back in England, the surveillance was stepped up when the Home Secretary alerted the MI5 to monitor Booth and his activities, subsequent to reports being received again from the Nyasaland Government.

It is not easy to discover which Division of MI5 actually took on the task to shadow Booth. But following Nigel West's description of the roles of various sections of MI5, Booth may have been placed under Divisions 'C', 'F' and 'B', whose roles involved 'vetting', 'Overseas Control on Defense Security' and 'GPO, letter interception Unit' respectively.<sup>93</sup>

As Langworthy rightly points out in the end, "It is impossible to determine what action MI5 took or what was reported to the Home Office".<sup>94</sup> However, he also believes Booth's movements were severely curtailed, hence "no doubt the difficulties Booth faced in finding and keeping employment over the next few years were partly due to MI5 surveillance".<sup>95</sup> I feel that if the War Office (MI5) did eventually report to the Home Office at all, there seems to have been no recommendation made to prosecute Booth under the Defence of the Realm Regulation 14b. For even by 1919, he was still active in canvassing for members of the British African Congress Association as his own testimony suggests:

Such membership is still sought for and application forms should be applied for to the writer as British Secretary of the British African Congress whom the said Declaration dated Basutoland July 4: 1915 will be sent, with 'Equal rights' pledge form for signature giving the right of equal partnership for all future time to them and their descendents so long as they keep to that pledge.<sup>96</sup>

Booth still looked forward to the time "when the same tests, which are now applied in Britain are extended to British Africa".<sup>97</sup> However, during these years in Britain Booth hardly settled at any one place long enough to enable him effectively to implement any of his pro-African nationalist ideas. Langworthy attributes this partly



Plate 21. David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, gave an audience to the South African Native National Congress [ANC] delegation to England at the House of Commons on 21 November 1919.

Courtesy Brian Willan

to MI5 surveillance, as the following statement suggests concerning Booth and his wife:

After leaving Tupgill in mid April they spent a month in Radlett, Herts, in what Booth wrote was 'a paradise looking place but to the spirit it was hell'. Their next position, which they thought would be until August, for £40, lasted only eleven days. No doubt MI5 informed their employer, an ex-army captain, of Booth's pacifist commitment, for suddenly the other servants became unbearable and they were given £10 for such a short time, to leave 'to save some sort of police affair'. By early June the Booths had obtained a position in Staines, Bucks., ... However, Booth despondently wrote that he feared the police would again follow them and turn people against them ... [requested for financial help] so that he would be able to live without the constant threat of insecurity and police prosecution.<sup>98</sup>

However, whether due to MI5 interference or not, Booth's political career as an advocate of African nationalism, of equal rights for all in the Colonial Empire, was effectively ended. Despite what has to be considered decidedly exaggerated reaction by the British authorities to this devout pacifist, they were right in a way to fear him. Although all of Booth's plans of action had little lasting practical results, he was also a purveyor and populariser of ideas and these were not without real effect.

Booth's claims for education of the indigenous peoples of the Colonies, for their being granted equal civil rights with all other subjects of the Crown, were of the same mould as the ideas the African National Congress were developing at this period. His link with the emerging A.N.C. has not previously been appreciated but recognition is now emerging in South Africa.<sup>99</sup> These same claims were those which the Nyasaland African National Congress, the eldest offspring of the A.N.C., demanded when it came into being in 1944.<sup>100</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 A letter from John Pedder, Principal Assistant Secretary, Home Office (Whitehall) to Mr H.J. Read, his counterpart in the Colonial Office (Downing Street), 7 December 1916, C0525/70, PRO, London, p.276.
- 2 Nigel West, MI5: British Security Service Operations 1909-1945 (London, 1981), p.11.
- 3 Harry Langworthy 'Booth in Exile 1915-1919', Manuscripts on Booth's Biography - not yet published. p.23.
- 4 A Confidential letter from G. Smith, the Governor of Nyasaland to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 28 August 1916, C0525/68, PRO, London, p.412.
- 5 Harry Langworthy, "Joseph Booth, Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa, 1891-1915" Journal of Religion in Africa XVI, 1(1986), p.41.
- 6 Confidential letter - G. Smith to Colonial Office, 28 August 1916, op. cit. p.412.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., p.413
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid., pp.413-414.
- 15 Ibid., p.414.
- 16 Colonial Office Minutes, C0525/68, PRO, London, p.410.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.

- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid. After all Booth was permitted to speak publicly in Britain about his BAC manifesto. A letter from Booth to Mary (daughter) dated 7.1.16 in Leeds states, "Only 2 hours ago I fixed with the Chief of Police where I can speak my message of the British African Congress: They have given me the steps of the African Monument in front of Leeds town Hall." Provided by Prof. Harry Langworthy.
- 21 Ibid., p.411.
- 22 Ibid., p.410.
- 23 Ibid. Note: For a full discussion between 'Booth and the Watch Tower Millenarianism', see Chapter V.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Confidential letter - G. Smith to Colonial Office, 28 August 1916, op. cit. p.413.
- 26 Ibid., p.414.
- 27 Colonial Office Minutes, op. cit. p.411.
- 28 Confidential Despatch - G. Smith to Colonial Office, 28 August 1916, op. cit. p.419.
- 29 Ibid., p.415.
- 30 Colonial Office Minutes, op. cit. p.411.
- 31 A letter from Mr H.J. Read, Colonial Office to Home Office, 14 November 1916, C0525/68, PRO, London, p.420. Note also that eventually copies of correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Home Office were sent to the Governor of Nyasaland and the South African Government.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid., pp.420-421.

- 38 Ibid., p.421.
- 39 A letter from John Pedder, Home Office to the Colonial Office, 7 December 1916, op. cit. p.276.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Nigel West, op. cit. p.15.
- 42 Ibid., p.16
- 43 The Public General Acts, King George the fifth (London, 1914), p.80.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 H.O. 45/10690/228849. PRO, London.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 C0417/556, PRO, London
- 51 The British African Congress, Enclosure No. 2. in Nyasa 'Secret' of 28 August 1916, C0525/68, PRO, London,P.417.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid.

- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid., pp.417-418.
- 67 Harry Langworthy, 'Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa, 1891-1915', op. cit. p.40.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 Joseph Booth, C154/2-29 (Bodleian).
- 70 The British African Congress - Preamble. See Shepperson Collection, EUML, Edinburgh.
- 71 A printed Letter from Solomon Plaatje to Joseph Booth (London, 18 July 1916). Kindly provided by Prof. Emeritus G. A. Shepperson.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Harry Langworthy, 'Charles Domingo - Seventh Day Baptists and Independency', Journal of Religion in Africa XV, 2 (1985), p.117.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 A letter from Joseph Booth to John Chilembwe, 29 July 1914, C0525/61, PRO, London, p.691.
- 76 Ibid., pp.691-692.
- 77 Joseph Booth, MIZPAH -Mss 2504, Shepperson Collection, EUML, Edinburgh.
- 78 A letter from Joseph Booth to John Chilembwe, 29 July 1914, op. cit. p.692.
- 79 C0551/67, 10 June 1914, p.431. See also a letter to L. Harcourt, 15 June 1914,

C0551/67 p.436.

- 80 Native Appeal - See Shepperson Collection, EUML, Edinburgh.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 A letter from Joseph Booth to John Chilembwe, 29 July 1914 op. cit. p.692.
- 84 Sol T. Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa (London, 1916), p.260. Note also that Plaatje does suggest that the Bloemfontein Congress deliberations were hampered by the news "that war had broken out between Great Britain and Germany" and therefore the delegates "decided to hang up native grievances against the South African Parliament till a better time". pp.260-261.
- 85 Booth to Chilembwe, 29 July 1914, op. cit.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Joseph Booth - MIZPAH MSS 2504 Shepperson Collection, EUML, Edinburgh.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Joseph Booth, 'British Christian Union' February 1913 - Shepperson Collection EUML, Edinburgh.
- 90 The British African Congress, Enclosure No. 2., op. cit. p.417.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 A confidential despatch - G. Smith to Colonial Office op. cit. p.413.
- 93 Nigel West, op. cit.
- 94 Harry Langworthy, 'Booth in Exile 1915-1919' op. cit. p.23
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Joseph Booth, C154/2-29, p.16.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Harry Langworthy, 'Booth in Exile 1915-1919' op. cit. p.28.

- 99 Gail M. Gerhart and Thomas Karis, From Protest to Challenge (California, 1977), pp.9-10, (Political Profiles) vol.4. See also Appendix A.
- 100 The N.A.N.C. was formed by the coming together of the various Nyasaland Native Associations, the first of which, the North Nyasa Native Association, was formed in 1912.

## CONCLUSION

When John Selfridge summed up 'The Influence of Joseph Booth and John Chilembwe on the history of the Church in Nyasaland (now Malawi)', he described Booth as "one dying a natural death, after feeling that most of his life had been spent in fruitless effort to benefit the people of Africa".<sup>1</sup> And he referred to Chilembwe, Booth's African protégé, as "the other being shot after attempting the same goal, but in a violent manner".<sup>2</sup> Selfridge then concluded, "We leave the reader, then to weigh the influence ... of what results would have been, had they followed a different course!"<sup>3</sup> But one wonders what other course Selfridge had in mind or envisaged. After all, Booth and his African protégés took the peaceful way of petition and protest, but the government authorities either took no notice or suppressed them.

In recent months, an article published in The Scotsman again described Booth as 'self-righteous, polemical and devious', adding "Booth smelt injustice to the Africans everywhere and claimed to have invented the slogan 'Africa for the African'".<sup>4</sup> It is clear that in the main, most European scholars and commentators have been critical of Booth and in certain cases with great hostility. And even among those more sympathetic to his pro-African causes regarded Booth as a 'religious hitchhiker'<sup>5</sup> or someone whose life was at the mercy of various crises of faith<sup>6</sup> because of his frequent shift in denominational allegiance. However, one sees that such opinions fail to provide a balanced focus upon the main issue of 'Africa for the African', which in Booth's opinion was more important than has hitherto been recognised or acknowledged. This thesis is an attempt to assess Booth's life, thought and influence in relation to religion and politics, with special reference to Central and

South Africa, and focuses also on this latter key point of his 'Africa for the African' ideology.

Booth was a radical reformer whose biblical interpretation of the scripture, as already shown in this thesis, was reminiscent of that of the 16th century Anabaptists. It is interesting to note that regarding the 'independents' in Africa, Walls suggests, "In some ways, the radical biblicists among the independents may be compared to the Anabaptists in Western Church history ... the same insistence of following the Word as they hear it".<sup>7</sup> Booth's seminal vision regarding the restoration of Africa to the Africans seems to have been based on his simple understanding that the Gospel of Christ espoused social justice and the universal brotherhood of man. The socio-political dislocations of African life over the years brought about by the slave trade, the 'Scramble for Africa', colonial rule and the loss of land to European settlers, left Africans being treated unjustly and deemed to be less than human. The Gospel Message of justice and brotherhood was what they needed above all. Hence, although one sees that Booth was greatly preoccupied with fundamental doctrinal issues related to missions, the Sabbath and to a lesser degree the millennium, his overriding theme was his 'Africa for the African' doctrine. This was the shining star he followed, as expressing what the Gospel meant for Africa. It is in this light he must be seen, moving from one denomination to the other and even in certain instances compromising or abandoning particular doctrines, but this was not so with his ideology of 'Africa for the African', which remained his *raison d'être* up to the end of his life.

One other important point to note is that from virtually all the religious and

political organizations he helped to establish, African leaders emerged<sup>8</sup> who adopted and endorsed his philosophy of 'Africa for the African'. This was a form of 'consciousness raising' before the phrase was invented, and places his work as a precursor of today's Black and Liberation theologies. Booth often argued that Africans must be admitted to "hold equal positions and be entitled to take charge of their own stations on parallel lines with the European missionary".<sup>9</sup> He nonetheless to his disappointment recognised that many of his European associates in the organizations he worked for were unable to accept this. Some quietly avoided putting it into practice, but some even poured scorn on his radical approach to work. It is important to point out, however, that although Booth had disagreements with the Blantyre Mission, he nonetheless commended their radical policy. He wrote:

"I would like to remark in passing that in this matter of liberally qualifying the approved Native Christian for holding responsible positions and replacing the European workers, as they retire with Native successors, the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland sets an admirable example, and had shown a truly generous Christian spirit".<sup>10</sup>

Booth's call for reform was also extended to the white community and in particular the colonial authorities. He petitioned that Africans be provided with the best education, equivalent to that in Britain. And as these Africans became available, that they be given positions of leadership with a view to governing their own countries. Again such ideas were greeted with disdain. "To Sharpe [Colonial Governor] Booth was 'shifty, undesirable, dangerous man'".<sup>11</sup> And so in Central and South Africa, Booth faced not only fierce opposition but also expulsions from these territories. Many European settlers felt he was anti-white. However, this is not so,

and one sees that he was also critical of Africans, notably of the chiefs, who, "subsidized by large appropriations from public funds, and by the compulsory unpaid labor on the land of all males and females grow rapidly rich by the production of huge crops at the expense of the Native people entrusted to their care for just and considerate treatment".<sup>12</sup> George Shepperson asserts that this:

"Should serve to remind those who know him only as a critic of the abuses of white rule in Africa that he could, when he felt the occasion demanded it, be equally severe against what he believed to be the injustices that Africans were capable of committing against each other".<sup>13</sup>

Booth's work 'Africa for the African' contained his central theme, because he found it proceeding from the Gospel of Christ. He believed that this taught not only salvation from sin but also from any other form of oppression. Booth's schemes were not always practical and yet his ideas gained considerable recognition among African radicals. Hence Plaatje could say of Booth, "Besides the Colenso family, I cannot remember any white person who has fought so doggedly in the thankless cause of our ignorant, despised race, as you have consistently done".<sup>14</sup> Booth was indeed an Africanist, although his dedication to ideals of 'Godly Commonwealth', peace, social justice, equality and pan-Africanism were often aborted in his own lifetime. Africans with whom he interacted viewed him, nonetheless, as someone who truly represented their cause and championed their rights and self-respect.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. John Selfridge, 'The Influence of Joseph Booth and John Chilembwe on the history of the Church in Nyasaland (now Malawi)' (a copy of his thesis - printed booklet provided to me) n.d. p.66.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. A letter from James D. McEwan to the Editor of the Scotsman, Saturday, 22 December, 1990 written in response to a BBC2 Television documentary about Rev. John Chilembwe (Timewatch: 'White man's grave, Black man's grave').
5. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, Independent African (Edinburgh, 1958) p.19. Note: John Parrat, 'Religious Independency in Nyasaland - A Typology of Origins' African Studies 38(2) 1979. He also describes "The colourful and eventful career of Joseph Booth" as reminiscent of a "spiritual hitchhiker". p.186.
6. Harry Langworthy, 'Joseph Booth, Prophet of Radical Change in Central and South Africa, 1891-1915' Journal of Religion in Africa vol. XVI (4) 1986, p.31.
7. Andrew F. Walls, 'The Anabaptists of Africa? The Challenge of the African Independent Churches' Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, vol. 3, (2) April, 1979, 50. Booth among Africans followed this pattern.
8. Among those Booth influenced directly were John Chilembwe, John Dube, Charles Domingo, Elliot Kamwana, Paul Matibasa and Saul Msane.
9. Joseph Booth, Africa for the African (Baltimore, 1897), p.45.
10. Ibid., p.46.
11. George Shepperson and Thomas Price, op. cit. p.131.
12. A letter from Joseph Booth, Sekubu, Butha Buthe, 30 April 1915 to The President, African chiefs and its Basutoland Pitso members. Mss S3/10/5/8 Shepperson Collection EUML, Edinburgh.
13. George Shepperson, 'Joseph Booth and the Africanist Diaspora', the tenth Melville J. Herskovits Memorial Lecture, delivered under the auspices of the program of African Studies, Northwestern University, on 6 March, 1972, p.7.
14. See Appendix K<sub>2</sub>.

## APPENDIX A

**Joseph Booth's Religious and Political profile by Gail M. Gerhart and Thomas Karis, 'Political Profiles 1882-1964' vol.4 IN Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter [eds.], From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882-1964 (California, Hoover Institution Press, 1977), pp. 9010. Shows his contribution to Southern African History**

**Booth, Joseph.** A unique figure in the missionary history of central and southern Africa, Booth was one of the earliest proponents of the principle of "Africa for the Africans." Born in 1851 in Derby, England, he was a farmer in New Zealand, then a small businessman in Australia until experiencing a missionary call at the age of 41 in 1892. He established a mission station in the Shire highlands of Nyasaland, but his unorthodox approach to mission work and his schemes for African self-help and advancement eventually created friction with colonial authorities and he was barred from central Africa around 1903 as an alleged supporter of Ethiopianism or African religious separatism.

Booth had in the meantime made at least one attempt to promote his radical notions of African self-determination in South Africa. On a three-month visit to Natal in 1896 he presented plans for an African Christian Union, which would establish industrial missions; these in turn would be nuclei for a vast and utopian scheme of African development, directed by Africans themselves. A conference of educated Zulu to whom Booth put this plan rejected it, either out of mistrust or timidity, and Imvo Zabantsundu denounced Booth as a dangerous radical, but Booth was undeterred. Again in South Africa in 1912-1913, living off rent from boarders in his Cape Town home, one of whom was D. D. T. Jabavu, Booth drew up ambitious plans for a system of "British Christian Union Native Training Institutes," which would train Africans in modern skills and give them a base for greater self-assertion. One of Booth's supporters in 1896 had been Saul Msane. In 1913 he enlisted support from Sol Plaatje and from John L. Dube, whom he had met in America in 1897. Nothing came of these schemes, however, and in 1914 Booth moved to Basutoland where he worked as an independent missionary. After the Nyasaland rising of 1915, led by John Chilembwe, one of Booth's early proteges, Booth came under suspicion and was deported from Basutoland to Britain. He was later permitted to return to South Africa, but when his health failed he went back to Britain and died there in 1932. His short book, *Africa for the African*, published in America in 1897, sets forth many of his ideas.

**APPENDIX B<sub>1</sub>**

**A Work Contract signed between Joseph Booth and his wife Annie Susan and the Sabbath Evangelizing and Industrial Association (SEIA) on 17 April 1899. FO2/248, PRO, London. p.178.**

Record of Agreement, entered upon in the name of and to accomplish the purpose of Him who declared "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren."

Witnesseth, The Sabbath Evangelizing & Industrial Association hereinafter called the "First Party" and Joseph Booth and his wife, Annie Susan Booth, hereinafter called the "Second Party" do on behalf of the said Association solemnly covenant and agree to co-operate in an effort to establish in Nyassaland, East Africa, a Sabbath keeping Industrial Mission Station on Baptist principles, as set forth in the constitution of the said Association.

The First Party and Second Party mutually agree that Schedules marked A and C respectively with the foot notes D and E as hereunto appended, shall define the work attempted, and the limit of responsibility. The First Party agrees to the following:

I To make a sustained effort to provide the necessary funds, and to apply them on the basis indicated.

II To commit the charge of the Industrail [sic] work and of the Womens' work at the first station established into the hands of the Second Party as a life work, terminable only by breach of agreement or by mutual consent.

III The First Party retains the right to place the purely Mission staff under separate superintendency, each section being accountable directly to the first party.

The Second Party agrees to the following:

I To accept the charge and to forthwith proceed to East Africa and enter upon the work specified under the conditions defined, and to devote the whole of their time and energies to the prosecution of the same.

II To regulate the annual expenditure in Africa within any sum available of not less than Three Thousand Dollars yearly (The amount available to the ensealing hereof being \$3,000.00) providing that the workers sent out at the Association's charges be not in excess of those applied for by the Second Party.

Done at Plainfield, New Jersey, the 17th day of April, 1899.

**THE SABBATH EVANGELIZING & INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION,**

(Signed)	David E. Titsworth, President,
"	William C. Hubbard, Secretary.
"	Joseph Booth,
"	Annie Susan Booth

Seal

S. E. & I. A.

"

**APPENDIX B<sub>2</sub>**

**BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA PROTECTORATE**  
**Regulations respecting Hut Tax**  
**FO 2/65 PRO London p.47**

In pursuance of Article 15 of "The African Order in Council, 1889". I do hereby order that such provisions of a certain Proclamation No. III of 1887 made by the Governor of Zululand as relate to hut tax, modified and adapted as appeared in the copy annexed hereto, shall have effect and be administered in the British Central Africa Protectorate, and shall be intituled "The Hut Tax Regulation, 1894".

May 1. 1894

Signed

Kimberley.

**APPENDIX C**  
**A Public Record Office (London) Document CO537/513.**  
**OPINION OF ETHIOPIAN MOVEMENT**

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Dr Stewart of Lovedale	Distinctly anti-White: Social and racial under guise of religion.
Cape Ministers	Propagates detrimental racial doctrines.
Mr Rein, sub-Inspector of Schools.	Less religious than political, on racial anti White lines.
Mr. T. Logie, acting Inspector of Schools.	Anti-White, employs terrorism.
Rev. E. Makiwane	Anti-White; employs terrorism and persecution.
Passim	Founded, not in new districts, but by causing dissensions in old fields of Missionary Labour.
"Imvo" (Native Paper)	Incompatible with loyalty and peace.
U. Sec. Native Affairs, Natal	Exaggerated
Sec. Native Affairs, Cape.	Tends to unite tribes and arouses Jealousy of Missionaries but no active sedition.
Cape Ministers.	Engenders restlessness but does not threaten public peace.
Mr. Dick, Special Magistrate, King William's Town	"No element of danger, or mischievous agitation, Jealousy of European Missionaries is aroused". "Undesirable that Government should be mixed up with religious controversies".

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## APPENDIX D

(See Shepperson Collection - EUML, Edinburgh)

COPY

N.A. 16/07

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

Johannesburg, 9th. May, 1909.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER,

Criminal Investigation Department.

Sir,

Reference Enquiry 1153: Joseph Booth.

I sent Native Detective Phillip to Pretoria to make enquiries re this man.

Philip has returned and reports:

Joseph Booth is in Pretoria. He is a member of the Baptist Church.

He is said to have about 12 Natives and 8 European students, whom he is giving private lessons in his house, no one is admitted unless he is a member.

Philip got in company with one of the Native students J. David who informed him that on the 2nd. May, 1909, Booth accompanied by his 12 Native students went to the European Christ Church in Pretoria and entered the Church.

The Natives were ejected and Booth caused a disturbance.

A Constable was called, he found Booth in front of the Church door demanding an entrance for his Native students.

The constable was told to arrest Booth and Booth asked for the Church regulations to be produce.

He was not arrested but left the Church.

This man also informed Phillip that he could not give him any further information unless he joined as a member of Booth's school, as he was teaching Theology and it was dangerous in the Transvaal.

Booth has informed them not to say anything to either Black or White as he has a lot of enemies.

I should suggest that Phillip be sent to the C.I.D. Pretoria, to get in as a member of Booth's school.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(signed) A.J. Hoffman, DETECTIVE

## APPENDIX E

Notes of an African detective employed by the South African Police to monitor Booth's movements and activities. (Special Collection 0 EUML, Edinburgh).

COPY

P R E T O R I A

15th. May 1909.

I arrived at Pretoria on 15/5/09 and to District Commandant to report arrival, and on the 16th.17th. and 18th. to John David re enquiries of Booth; On 19th. to school accompanied by J.David, but was refused to enter unless accompanied by the Native Minister at Larabastad Location, on the 29th. and 21st. was accepted and went with David and 3 other students to Park Hotel for Church, On 22nd. attended Church at 11 a.m. 18 pupils present accompanied with Joseph Booth, Native Minister preached and after that J.Booth said some words and told us that we must know that Saturday is the day for to be kept Holy, because it is the Holy day and so all those Ministers who told us that Sunday is the sabbath day they are all Liars. The Holy day is Saturday and so we must keep it Holy. On the 23rd. we had to go to the Station to meet an American man from America named George Whitene because Booth told us that he had a man sent from America who was well educated and they stopped himn at Cape Town they would not allow him to come to the Transvaal and so he asked them to send him a man that shall not be noticed that he is educated and so on Sunday the 23rd. we had to go and meet him at the Station and brought him pack to Park Hotel at (St.Andrews Street.)

When we arrived with the man above mentioned Booth told us that the said man is going to assist him in teaching and giving lessons. On 24th. Holiday - On 25th. and 26th. we had only Prayer Meetings going on and sermons through the arrival of the new teacher. On the 27th. he was giving out lessons to us stating that although the English has this bad treatment on us we must know clearly that after 5 years (i.e.) after 1914, we are going to rule ourselves and all these Kings and Queens, Governments and Judges who are ruling us here in the world they are all going to be destroyed and we are going to be equal as they are, (i.e.) No one will govern us, we will have their equal rights we will be just as the same as the King is, we shall rule ourselves, we shall have our own Laws and Rights.

He also told us that we must know quite well that there is nothing such as Hell and we must note also that all these Ministers and Bishops who state to us saying that there is Hell we must know quite well that they are Liars, and also we must know that the Devil which they mention to us about are the rulers which Judge us here on earth, that is why they make us to carry passes, and so after 5 years we shall never again

be ruled by the Europeans we shall rule ourselves,we then closed our meeting at 6 p.m.

On the 28th. we had been questioned on the above mentioned lessons so as to know whether we still remembered them because we were told that we must prepare ourselves for that day,and we must also try to explain that to all our native friends and we must also try to be one thing (i.e.) Unity,so that when the time comes we shall have to be together with our Native Brothers who are in America and we shall have our own Kings (i.e.) people whom we shall choose ourselves for to rule our Kingdom and so the brothers in America they are preparing for us and so also we must prepare for them.

On the 29th. attended Church till 12.30 p.m. and from 7p.m. till 8.30 p.m. Native Ministers preaching. On 30th. to Charge Office all day. On 31st. Holiday. On 1st. and 2nd. all day at Charge Office re pay.

On Thursday 3rd. at 11 a.m.we started our lessons,teaching us how to preach and telling us about the Jews,that after 5 years all are going back to Jerusalem to their home,and are going to rebuild their City and so we Gentiles we will have to pray so that when the end of the world comes in 1914 that we may be children of Christ. On Thursday night we had a Meeting for those who want to go out to Farms to Preach to the poor and also to try and make them to join with us and so 3 students, Natives from the (British Coast of Africa) said that they would first start and go out to farms and so we closed at 9 p.m.

On Friday night the 4th. we went again for our lessons and myself and John David we had a question about Hell because the teacher states to us that there is no such place as Hell,we then went through the Bible asking him how that can be because we are told that we shall be burned in a furnace fire,but he said that is not the truth because God could not say he loves us and then burn us and we then left at 9 p.m.

On Saturday it was a holiday we had services until 4 p.m. George Whitene and J.David preaching.

(Intd.) Phillip

## APPENDIX F,

(See Shepperson Collection - EUML, Edinburgh)

COPY

P R E T O R I A

14th JUNE 1909

Deputy Commissioner,  
Transvaal Police, C.I.D.,  
JOHANNESBURGH.

Re. Joseph Booth - American Missionary.

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The above named has opened a College at Pretoria at Park Hotel for religious instruction of Natives in the doctrine known as "Church of Christ" Millenium Dawn". The object of this College is to train Natives to be sent out to different parts of Africa to preach the doctrine of this Church.

This Church consists of both White and Coloured members and from time to time disputes have ocured, as some of the white members object mixing with their coloured co-religionists.

The principal belief of this Church is that in 5 years time the Millenium will begin when all Governments, Kings, Princes and Powers of this world shall be wiped away, and that every person will be governed by the power of God alone. I understand that Mr.Booth tells the Natives that when that time arrives all people and tongues will be equal and there will be no more opression or sin.

This Church supply any person requiring same with seven volumes called "Millenium Dawn" on payment of £1/1/- subscription to the Church Funds. These books are not sold only given to the subscribers.

This Church appears to be non - political and Booth and his followers believe they are preaching the genuine faith.

(Signed) H.P. Trew. Inspector  
District Commandant, T.P.  
PRETORIA

APPENDIX F<sub>2</sub>

F.Z.S. Peregrino acted as an informer for the SNA. He sent the letter below with an extract from The South African News, July 9th, 1909, in which it disclosed the deportation of Elliot Kamwana and his association with Joseph Booth.

The Secretary for Native Affairs

Pretoria  
[date not clear]

Sir,

The European referred to above is the notorious Mr Joseph Booth, who has returned to the Cape and it is adjudged impolitic to deport lest he poses abroad as being a martyr.

I have my own views as to the wisdom of the application of the policy of masterly inactivity in this man's case since the fellow is so resourceful and plausible and in going in and out among the people may pollute[sic] others and succeed in manufacturing rebels.

I am informed, although I have no proof of this at present that he is actively associated with A.P.O people and thus maintains correspondence in the Transvaal, my informant has promised to advise me further and should I discover the existence of any systematized plot I shall submit the facts.

I have the honour to be  
Your very faithful servant  
F.Z.S. Peregrino

APPENDIX G<sub>1</sub>

Gov. 26

22154

Nysa

Aug 20th 1909

To Hon. Colonel J.B. Seely,  
Colonial Office

Dear Colonel Seely,

I enclose herewith excerpt from a letter which has just come to me from a gentleman in Glasgow. The case seems a very peculiar one and before taking any action in connection with it I should be glad to know whether your Office has any information other than that conveyed in the letter.

Yours faithfully,

J Keir Hardie

APPENDIX G<sub>2</sub>

A copy of the letter Hardie enclosed to Seely from a 'gentleman in Glasgow' (No name). CO525/31, PRO, London, p.27.

Copy

"On March 18th last, Elliot Khamwana[sic], a native of Nyassa land who was engaged in a preaching tour in that country was suddenly arrested and brought before the R.M.Court at Chinteche[sic], Bandawa. No charge was made against the prisoner, no accusers appeared, no witnesses were called. He was simply interrogated as to his religious beliefs, nevertheless he was detained in prison until about May 4th when he was removed to Zomba to be further examined by the Governor Sir A. Sharpe.

Here again the farce of Chinteche was repeated. No charge was made, no accusers appeared, no witnesses were called, nor was Mr Khamwana even allowed to explain the nature of his teaching. Nevertheless the Governor saw fit to inflict a sentence on this poor native of five years imprisonment or deportation to Cape Town at his own charges.

Choosing the latter alternative Khamwana was sent to Chinde under guard, placed on board a steamer with instructions that he was not to be permitted to land at any port of call and finally reached Cape Town after enduring much suffering on the voyage.

Mr Khamwana's teachings are not in any way seditious nor likely to lead to rebellion. They are embodied in the "Divine Plan of the Ages" a book which has a large circulation in these islands [Britain] also in Canada and the United States of America, and which can be had from the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 24 Eversholt St, London, N.W. His doctrine is entirely religious and non-political and being based upon the Scriptures enjoins obedience to the Civil Magistrate.

Mr Khamwana's one fault seems to be that he has dared to differ in his religious beliefs from the missionaries now in Nyassaland & to have convinced a considerable number of the Christian natives of that region that said beliefs have a Scriptural foundation and for this he is treated like a criminal and a rebel and deported from his native land."

APPENDIX H,  
CO537/1197, PRO, London

HOUSE OF COMMONS

S.W.1.

Nov. 21.

1919

M I N U T E S

of a

DEPUTATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVES

to the

Rt. Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE, M.P. (Prime Minister)

On the Colour Bar and other Questions

From the Shorthand Notes of F. Primrose Stevenson  
38, Parliament Street, S.W. (Tele. 3324 Vic.)

**MEMBERS OF THE DEPUTATION**

**MR. S. T. PLAATJE (Chairman)**

**MR. R.V. THEMA (Secretary)**

**REV. HENRY REED NGCAYIYA (President of the Ethiopian Church)**

**MR. L. T. MVABAZA )**

**) Members**

**MR. J. T. GUMEDE )**

MR. L. T. MVABAZA:- Sir, the Right Honourable Prime Minister. It is with the utmost pleasure for me to thank you for the opportunity that is given to this Deputation to bring before your most honourable position some assurance of loyalty of six millions black people that we represent the Imperial Government, and to congratulate His Majesty's Government for the success which has accompanied his armies and those of our Allies together with the United States and become victorious once and for all over those of the enemies, I can still remember some of the most remarkable speeches that were made during the war. When the struggle was at its fiercest and Christianity seemed to be at stake, and, even the very foundation of the earth appeared to be shaky, your voice became so magnetic to many peoples and nations throughout the world, as they were made to understand that the war was waged for the protection of small nations and helpless peoples and to free the world from the Central Powers denomination. Then civilisation was to be saved and further, it was waged to save humanity, and to make the world fit to live in. About the end of the hostilities, you were again reported as having said that if you could not have enough courage to defend the principles of justice and freedom at the Peace Conference, you would rather have God made you inarticulate. The appeals which you made during the war to fight against His Majesty's enemies, went very deep to our hearts, and we thought it worth making every sacrifice for the safety of our Empire. Ninety three thousand of our men answered the call to South West and East Africa. Some went even to France. We wanted to do more than that, but we were refused. Even those who did their "bit" were accepted after a long struggle of repeated refusal. When the time of Peace Conference came the whole world was summoned to France by President Wilson's 14 points. We looked up on high and gave thanks to God, for we thought that the time had really come when all people must be set free. We expected to get some benefit of the 14 points. Very much so,

because we too had answered to the King's call and staked our all. Sir, excuse me referring to one incident of days gone by. It is because this is something similar to that, and something that has already happened. And it is this. During the Anglo-Boer war of 1899 to 1902, we took the British side as British subjects and fought against the Boers, but when the Peace time came, and the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed our rights were sacrificed. For, then and there, the "colour bar" was accepted by the British. Hence, the question of colour was introduced and sanctioned as a principle of British constitution in South Africa, for the first time in the annals of Great Britain. The British tradition of fair play, justice and freedom, irrespective of race, creed or colour, was substituted by the Dutch Gronwet which recognises no equality, between white and black, either in state or Church. Thus we were deprived of the liberty that we had enjoyed for many years, up to 1902 under the British rule. Peace was declared between the two white races, namely, the British and the Boers, and we were left fighting against the developed and combined forces of Dutch tradition. There was never any peace for us. So greatly disappointed were we in finding Great Britain making peace with the Boers at our expense. When the Boer regime got some recognition in 1902 we were henceforth governed by proclamations which brought us "passes". So numerous are these passes and yet the native is not safe unless he has got all of them in his possession. These passes may be classified as follows as I have got them.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Let me have a look at them. I have never seen them.

MR. MVABAZA: handed the passes to Mr. Lloyd George.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: What is the difference between a green one and the others?

MR. MVABAZA: The green one is a passport for indenture.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE holding a pass in his hand: That is a native tax receipt?

MR. MVABAZA: That is what the native has to carry all the time.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: What is this one for?

MR. MVABAZA: That is a registration certificate given to a native trader to ensure that he has paid the Government tax of £1.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE holding up another pass. MR. MVABAZA pointing to it: That is a monthly municipal pass. The native has to carry this pass to show to the police that he is working and has paid the Government tax of 2/- every month.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Is that in Johannesburg?

A MEMBER OF THE DEPUTATION: Yes that is in Transvaal, Orange Free State, and West Griqualand.

MR. GUMEDE: And Natal as well. It is called an identification pass without which a native cannot be employed.

THE REV. H. REED NGCAYIYA (President of the Ethiopian Church of South Africa) handed to Mr. Lloyd George a pass with the remark: That is a Rhodesia pass.

MR. MVABAZA (pointing to a pass at which Mr. Lloyd George was looking) If the native quarrels with his employer and the employer sticks "no good" in the space for character that native cannot be employed. Mr. Lloyd George

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: It is not filled in here at all.

MR. MVABAZA: The man was not discharged.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: What do you say is the difference between the green and the white?

MR. MVABAZA: The white one is for those who work in the mines, and the green one is for those who work in towns. They have to carry all these passes. There is a travelling pass without which a native cannot move from one place to another, and he cannot move from one district to another, and he has to pay a tax of one shilling.

The passes are as follows:-

- No. 1. Native Labour Passport which costs one shilling.
2. Monthly pass which costs 2/-.

3. Travelling Pass which costs 1/-.
4. Registration pass which costs f1 yearly.
5. Tax Pass which costs f2 yearly.
6. Special Pass for visiting, Free.
7. Night Pass, Free.
8. Residential Pass, Free.
9. School Pass, Free.
10. Six days special pass while looking for work.

The use of these passes may be shortly put as follows:-

(a) Passport to prevent the black man from selling his labour to a better employer.

(b) Monthly pass to show that the native is employed.

(c) Travelling pass to show to the Government that the native has been taxed for moving from one district to another. And each time he leaves a district he has to pay a tax. This is particularly so in the Transvaal.

(d) Registration pass to show that a Native trader has paid the Government [sic] tax and also to give informaton [sic] to the police that the bearer has no right to live in town.

(e) Tax pass to confirm that the native has paid the Government Poll Tax.

(f) Special pass to give some assurance to the police that the bearer has been permitted by his master to leave the premises for a certain place within a certain time.

(g) Night pass to authorise the native to be out of his master's premises after 9 p.m. and to return within a specified time of the same night.

(h) Residential pass is a permit by which the native is allowed a place to live.

(i) School pass for those who attend school.

(j) Six days' special pass is a permit given to a native while looking for work. And if he cannot get a job within those six days he must leave that district, paying 1/- to the Government, otherwise he is sent to gaol.

Under these laws things are rapidly going from bad to worse. And all are being hinged on the "colour bar" which is in the Union Constitution, at the formation of which the black man was excluded. Today the whole of the legislation of South Africa is based on Gront Wet, hence:-

(1) The Dutch Reformed Church Act of 1910, that white and black shall not worship God under the same roof.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Is that in the Constitution?

MR. VABAZA: It is an Act from the Legislation.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Is that in any other province except the Transvaal?

One of the Deputation: It is in all the provinces except the Cape.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Is there any Act of Parliament to say that in Natal that the native and white man shall not be allowed to worship under the same roof?

MR. GUMEDE: No Sir, Natal itself had no Act of the kind but it was passed by the Union Parliament. It began with a movement to federate the four Synods of the Dutch Reformed Church and bring them into line with the Church of the Transvaal and Orange Free State where white and black were not allowed to worship God under the same roof.

MR. MVABAZA continuing:

(2) The Defence Force Act of 1911 introduced by General Smuts which prohibits the black from becoming soldiers of the King.

(3) The Natives Land Act of 1913 which stipulates that no black man shall buy, lease or hire land except from another black man. But it forgets the fact that the black man has no more land.

(4) The Administration Bill of 1917 which has passed the second reading in the Union Parliament, allowing the black man to buy land in fever-stricken, malarial, bushy and stony land.

(5) Native Urban Areas Bill of 1917 which proposes the inspection of our women by European male doctors and that

children and women must carry passes showing that they are employed by some white men, otherwise they won't be allowed to live within the principality of that town. And again, that there shall be no trading, buying and leasing and hiring in town by natives. All these laws have been made against us because of the colour of our skin. And so we appeal to you Sir, for the removal of the "Colour bar" and these, its numerous offsprings - these oppressive, and unjust and inhumane laws! We appeal to you, Sir, for the absolute extermination of so unfair and so un-Christianlike principles that are being practised upon us in South Africa! We are told to go back to South Africa and fight our battles there constitutionally. But what constitutional means have we? None at all. We have no vote. For even the Cape natives who have the vote cannot send members of their own race to the Union Parliament, Natal, Transvaal, and Free State have no vote at all.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: In the Cape you have votes?

MR. MVABVAZA: Yes we have, but we cannot send members of our own race to the Union Parliament. And again, the Administration Bill of 1917 is aiming at taking away the vote in Cape Colony.

MR. GUMEDE: We may lose that vote by a two thirds majority in the House of Assembly.

MR. MVABAZA continuing: How then can we fight our battles in South Africa constitutionally? Native children are not even allowed to attend white schools which have been established by monies of their fathers. We plead for justice, fair play, freedom and liberty which are enjoyed by the British subjects. Again I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity of speaking.

MR. SOL PLAATJE: I am very sorry we have to weary you with our African difficulties, but if we were to speak till to-morrow morning we would never succeed to enumerate them all. As a matter of fact we have been to the Colonial Office

with these troubles, and they told us we had better go and settle our affairs in our own country. But what footing have we got in a country where we cannot even buy or hire a house. They could more logically advise us to go and fight our case in Scotland or in Wales for there at any rate nobody will prevent us from hiring or buying a house if we have the money. We may point out that we foresaw all the troubles that my friend has been trying to explain, at the time the Union Constitution was passed limiting the Franchise to white [sic] people only. The basis and the circumstances are not clearly understandable to people on this side of the Atlantic. But we clearly foresaw everything at the time so our people sent a deputation over which was supported by some of the brainiest white people in South Africa. Two of them were former Prime Ministers of Cape Colony, another is Mr. Justice Gardiner who has since been elevated to the Bench. Mr. Schreiner actually accompanied our deputation at his own expense, and they tried to point out that it was going to be a very dangerous business for the five million blacks if the Constitution was passed exactly as it came from South Africa. In that contention we were supported by some eminent colonial statesmen.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Does General Hertzog support you?

MR. PLAATJE: No, Sir. We were not against passing the Constitution. What we wanted was some sort of safeguard so that when the legislature passes hard laws against us we may have some means where to appeal to. The Imperial Government of the day gave our deputation the assurance that if we trusted the South African statesmen they would keep an eye on the South African Government who have promised to do the right thing by us. And my friend has been trying to show you how they discharged that trust. Things have been growing from bad to worse with the result that there are towns in South Africa where married women are not allowed to live in their husband's houses without the consent of the Town Clerk and unless they pay a shilling a month. But when they passed a law that

Natives shall neither buy nor hire land in South Africa our people felt that it was impossible to believe that the people of Great Britain who loved us so much that they sent missionaries to teach us a hundred years ago when they did not know us, could be aware of what is going on. So they sent a deputation to come and enlighten the British public on what is taking place. Under this law, a native formerly living as a tenant on a farm is not allowed to stay there unless he is a servant in the employ of the land owner. That is to say if my friend has farm - and what we call a farm is a stretch of territory extending right away from here to Uxbridge - and I come to him and say, "Will you allow my 50 head of cattle to graze on your farm?"

" The Legislature steps in and says, "As long as these cows belong to that black man, they shall not be allowed to eat the wild grass on your farm, but if he agrees to sell them to a white man it shall be lawful for the same cows to graze there." If the white man allows cattle of a black man to graze on his property he is liable to a penalty of £100, or six months' imprisonment. And for every day in addition as long as the cattle remain on his property, there is an extra fine of £5. Now what is the crime we have committed. We pay taxes on equal terms with the white people and over an [sic] above that, we pay special native taxes, I presume on the colour of our skin, for people of another colour have not got to pay it. With this money the Government build schools - some of the most beautiful schools you have seen anywhere - and from which our own children are excluded. They dare not go to these schools, schools built with our money. White children are educated in them compulsorily. It is our belief that the British people do not know these things. We are not entitled to any of the benefits of the Workman's Compensation Act passed by the Union Parliament. Why do they do these things? Because being voteless we are absolutely helpless. Sir Thomas Smartt and other members like the Right Honourable

J.K. Merriman have protested against these things again and again but their arguments take no effect. Great Britain with whom our fathers bargained in the earliest days to come and take our country under her protection has thrown us away. The people who rule in South Africa are the followers of General Hertzog and all Great Britain tells us is that she has nothing to do with it. And our object in coming over is to let the facts be known to the British public and to enlist the sympathy of the Prime Minister in these matters. We don't expect the Prime Minister to go over there and catch General Smuts by the scruff of his neck and say, "You must relieve these people or I will knock you down!" What we want done is simply in a constitutional manner. It is useless to go and tell our people that the home Government is absolutely powerless - even when we are oppressed. It would be useless to tell them that since they know that when the natives of the Belgian Congo were oppressed the people in England raised their voices against it, and the Foreign Office in this country communicated with the Belgian Government with the result that the native's condition on the Belgian Congo was so ameliorated that white men from our part of Africa who have been to the Belgian Congo, have returned and said it was impossible for them to make money in the Belgian Congo because the Belgians did not allow the white man to exploit the labour of the native as they are allowed to do in British South Africa. You did that for natives under a foreign flag. It is rather hard lines on the millions of native people whose only crime is that they are not loyal to the local rulers of their country, but that they are loyal to the British flag which out there is called a foreign flag. If in these circumstances you leave these people to the mercy of their oppressors their lot is going to be difficult indeed, and it would be difficult to convince them that the Allies have not lost the war because they heard that the Allies were fighting for the protection of oppressed nations. If ever there was a case which called for

protection it is the case of the natives of South Africa who are told that they have no right to buy or lease land in their own country.

The land on which I first saw the light is now the property of a German named Wolff whose movements were restricted during the war, and if he offered it to me - the land where I was born - he would be liable to a fine of £100 or six months imprisonment. It has become unlawful for a man to poke his nose outside his own house after 9 o'clock at night. Even in Cape Colony where no such restrictions existed before the Union he is not allowed to go outside his house without a written permit. There is the Railway Act which provides for the separation of natives and whites. If a black man is found on the railway platform, and there happen to be white people there, he is liable to arrest. The country is becoming intolerable for us to live in. In Cape Colony we have some hot springs at a town called Aliwal North. Years ago I used to go and swim there for pure pleasure and not out of necessity. After the recent influenza epidemic my little daughter, who had overworked herself while ministering to patients, got literally shrivelled up by rheumatism. We were advised to send her to Aliwal North, but we found on her arrival there that because of her colour she was not allowed to take the water, not even to save her life. These things are not confined to particular Provinces of the Union, but are spreading all over and it is becoming unbearable for Natives to live in some parts of the country. Our only request is, in view of the fact that you have ameliorated the lot of the Belgian Natives under a foreign flag, and at the instance of Lord Harding you successfully intervened in favour of Indians who appealed against the operation of an Act passed by the Union Parliament of 1913, you should consider us in the land of our fathers. The native has no other place to go to. Our one crime is not that we want to be the equals of the Dutch

but that we are loyal to a foreign flag, the Union Jack. If it offers us no protection then our case is indeed hopeless.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: When I heard in Paris that your Deputation was coming over to this country with a view to presenting their case to the British Government I heard at the same time that there was a deputation from General Hertzog and his associates. He also wanted to present a case of a totally different character to the British Government. His claim was presented in the same of self-determination that the whole of South Africa should be independent of any connection with the British Empire at all. He told me, however, that he did not think the coloured population of South Africa agreed with him, who numbered about 5,000,000, and that he only spoke on behalf of a third of the white population. You now confirm that he did not speak on behalf of the coloured population. Well let me say at once that I fully recognise, and recognise with gratitude the loyalty which your people have shown to the flag when we appealed for recruits to help in a very great struggle for freedom and liberty throughout the world. The response that came from your population was a very gratifying one and it was to us a very welcome testimony of the fidelity of your people to the British throne. I have listened with some distress to the story you have told of of [sic] restrictions which are imposed upon you in your native land. It is very difficult for a British statesman to express an opinion upon matters which do not come within his cognisance and of course, I have not heard what is to be said on the other side. You know exactly what the constitutional position is. The Dominions of the Crown are practically independent in all legislative and administrative matters pertaining to their own areas. The British Ministry never interferes with the internal affairs of Canada, New Zealand, Australia or South Africa. It has become the established practice of the Constitution and therefore we could not, whatever view the

British Ministry might take of these very drastic and severe regulations - we could not directly interfere with the Government of South Africa. I shall take full note of all you have said. Any further particulars you may have I should like you very much to put my Secretary in possession of. I have a shorthand note of the very clear and able and temperate speeches which you have delivered here. You have presented your case with very great power and I shall feel it to be my duty to communicate direct with the Prime Minister of the Cape and inform him of the character of the deputation and the way you have presented your case and all the facts which you have brought before me. I saw General Botha when I was in Paris and I receive this deputation with his full approbation and consent and I have no doubt at all that General Smuts takes exactly the same view. Having received the deputation with their knowledge and with their full approbation it will certainly be my duty to communicate the pith and purport of what you have said to me at the earliest opportunity. You know perfectly well from your experience and from your observations the general attitude which Great Britain has taken with regard to the Dominions. If South Africa were under the control of the British Parliament, well, I should know exactly what to do. I should certainly take all your grievances into immediate consideration and examine them very carefully and give due weight to all you have said with the feeling that we were dealing with a population which has been very loyal to the flag and who had rendered service when it was required by the British Empire. But when you deal with a self-governing dominion I must follow the fixed practice of the Constitution and all I can do on behalf of the Imperial Government is to communicate with the Prime Minister of the Cape the whole of the facts as they have been presented to me. I am very glad to have this opportunity of meeting you and of hearing from you your case. Without expressing an opinion, which I have no right certainly even to form until I have

heard the other side, I can only say that at the present moment. You have said enough to convince me that it is certainly a case which ought to be taken into the consideration of the South African Government and I shall certainly take the earliest opportunity of presenting the whole of the facts to General Smuts.

The Deputation withdrew

**APPENDIX H<sub>2</sub>**  
**SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS**  
**by the South African Delegation**

Mr. L.T. MVABAZA, Managing Director, Abantu-Batho, Ltd.

Mr. R.V. SELOPE-THEMA, General Secretary Transvaal Congress

Rev. HY. REED NGCAYIYA, President, Ethiopian Church of South Africa

J.T. GUMEDE

SOL. T. PLAATJE

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1. F R A N C H I S E

Prior to the Act of Union of 1909 the Africans in the Cape of Good Hope were eligible for seats in the local House of Assembly or Parliament, qualification applicable to both races being (a) a property qualification of £75, (b) an income, - of £50 per annum, (c) to be able to read and write.

In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State natives had no such political rights whatsoever, while in Natal, although in theory they had such rights, in practice they are absolutely barred.

When the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed in 1902 between the Boers and the British Government, the question of native franchise in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State was considered, but ultimately the Boers succeeded in postponing it until Responsible Government was granted to the conquered territories. Unfortunately when Responsible Government was granted in 1907, this matter was not taken up, and, in spite of protests and petitions to the British Government, the natives were excluded from the franchise.

In 1909 members of the Provincial Parliaments, existing prior to the Act of Union held a series of secret conventions, and their recommendations were forwarded to the Imperial Parliament, passed both the Commons and the Lords, in spite of

native appeals through a deputation of which the present High Commissioner was a member, and formed the Act of Union.

The principle of the Grond Wet, the Constitution of the late Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, namely, "the people shall admit of no equality between white and black in either State or Church," was perpetuated in this Act, and yet prior to 1899 nearly every Englishman condemned it.

In each of the four provinces of the Union of South Africa there is a Council to manage local affairs, and in these Councils, with the exception of the Cape, black men are not eligible for seats.

#### 2. DEFENCE FORCE ACT, 1911.

Having disarmed the natives politically, the white people of South Africa proceeded to strengthen themselves by passing in the Union Parliament the Defence Force Act, 1911, in which "colour bar" was introduced, since it became law that no person could become a member of the Citizen Force unless he was of European descent.

#### 3. NATIVES LANDS ACT, 1913.

Having thus rendered the native people helpless and defenceless, the Union Parliament passed the Natives Lands Act, 1913. Under this Act no native is allowed to buy land, except in the Cape, pending the report of the Lands Commission, which was appointed to find land that was unsuitable for European settlement, so as to reserve same as an area in which the black man could buy and own land.

The Commission has reported, and the land they found is situate for the most part in marshy, malarial, and barren districts. There are about 5,000,000 native people in the Union territories, and to them is allotted 13 per cent of the land, while 87 per cent is reserved for whites who are only 1½ millions. Thousands of people are to-day homeless.

#### 4. NATIVE AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION BILL, 1917.

Acting on the recommendation of the Lands Commission appointed under the Natives Lands Act above-mentioned, the Minister of Native Affairs introduced in Parliament the Native Affairs Administration Bill in 1917. This has actually passed the second reading, but is temporarily suspended. It provided that native areas shall be under five Commissioners (white), who will advise the Minister of Native Affairs and have the power of making proclamations [sic] which will have the force of law without reference to Parliament.

Provision is also made for the appointment of native (white not black) magistrates, and no black man can be a magistrate.

Further, appeals from the decisions of a magistrate under the Act are to be taken, not to the Supreme Court, but to the Appellate Court, where the expenses are practically prohibitive. No native can live in white areas except as a servant.

#### 5. NATIVE URBAN AREAS BILL, 1918

This was introduced in 1918, and enacts that no native shall reside in towns or engage in trade on their own account therein. Women, as well as men, are to carry passes. There is provision for the medical inspection of women whenever they come into towns to work. At a place called Sterkstroom, in the Cape, women and men, up to this day, have their hair shaved clean, and are examined naked by a male doctor, disinfected, and kept for 24 hours before being allowed to proceed. The process is repeated on the return journey on completion of their work.

#### 6. CIVIL SERVICE

All coloured interpreters and clerks in the Law Courts and Native Affairs Department have been dismissed since Union, and replaced by Dutchmen, who are practically ignorant of native languages. Hence many innocent people are convicted as criminals.

It is in the Government regulations that no native is to be employed in any clerical position, even though he passes

the Civil Service examination.

There are separate post-offices for blacks, which are generally situate either at the back or in the underground of the white post-office. Strange to say that even in these post-offices no native clerks are employed, in spite of many protests and petitions to the Government. No native is allowed to enter a white post-office, or to keep his hat on within any public office.

#### 7. TAXATION AND EDUCATION

The lack of uniformity in taxation constituted a serious grievance, mostly among the natives of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In the Transvaal they are taxed directly £2 a head per annum, men and boys over the age of 16. In the Free State the head-tax is £1. In Natal there is a legal tax of £1 which has not been enforced since 1906, and up to now the head tax is 14s. per annum.

All these taxes are payable till death, or till exempted by extreme age or physical incapacity. The average native labourer earns about 1s. 6d. per diem.

Notwithstanding these enormous taxes, the State practically contributes nothing towards native education. All native schools are established by missionaries from Great Britain and America. Of course, the Government helps the missionaries with little sums of money. At one time in the Transvaal the Government grant to native schools was little over the sum of money expended by them for the upkeep of the animals in the Pretoria Zoo. In 1917 the grant in that Province was about £17,000 for more than a million natives.

#### 8. PASS LAWS.

In the Transvaal every man is forced to carry a pass, while in the Orange Free State both men and women are affected. No one may leave his town or farm, even though it may be only two minutes off, without a pass. Any native found in town, even outside the door of his own house, without a pass after 9 p.m., is liable to arrest and imprisonment.

If a man leaves his home to go to a town in search of work he has to have a travelling pass. On arrival he has to go to the pass office and obtain a "special pass", to enable him to look for work in town for six days only. If he does not find work within the six days he is imprisoned for a fortnight. On being liberated he is given another six days in which to find work. If he succeeds in getting any, his master has to see that he is registered in his (the master's) name at the pass office. The master retains the passport, and the man is given a monthly pass. On discharge the master signs the passport and describes the man's character therein. Some whites in South Africa are bad payers, and they generally neglect or refuse to pay their servants, at the end of the month, and this generally brings about quarrels between the parties. Then the white man having the passport in his possession (no native can leave his master without the passport) spoils the man's character by marking on the passport either "no good", "lazy", or "dangerous", &c.

With the man's character thus described on the passport, it is impossible for him to obtain work anywhere. Should he lose his passport, or, in desperation, destroy it, he is imprisoned, his fingerprint taken, and he is branded a criminal. Many have been driven to highway robbery as a consequence of this system.

If a native happens to be living in town location in the Free State, and is not working for a white employer, he has to pay for passes a tax of 5/- monthly each in respect of himself, his wife and every child above the age of 16.

A strike against the Pass Laws is now in progress, men have been shot, and men and women are being imprisoned.

These Pass Laws are similar to those which existed in the United States during the days of slavery.

## APPENDIX I

A letter from D.D.T. Jabavu to G.A. Shepperson  
(See Special Collection - EUML, Edinburgh)

PROFESSOR D. D. T.

JABAVU

"PHUMULONG"

MIDDLEDRIFT, C.P.

Dr George Shepperson  
Edinburgh University  
Scotland

31st May, 1954

Dear Dr Shepperson,

Yours of 9th March reached me on the 9th of April, since when I have travelled widely and could not settle down to my letters till now.

I am sorry I cannot help you much in your quest, just because I do not possess the information you desire.

Yes, I travelled with Mr Peter Nyambo in April 1903 in the Kinfauns Castle from Cape Town to Southampton when he was under the charge of Mr Joseph Booth, and never saw him again after that, or after 1904.

I met Mr Booth off and on but sufficiently to form definite impressions, namely, that he was a very vigorous fighter for the rights of Africans in the then German East Africa, bold in encountering Africans who had never before met a white man (so he told us), bold in fighting their cause by means of public platform addresses, incurring many white enemies by reason of his extreme methods and language. On my return to South Africa in September 1914 he invited me to stay with him somewhere in Sea Point, where he kept a private Board & Lodging house with his wife and daughter, and, in keeping with his determined nature, he ran the gauntlet of his boarders who strongly objected to having a black man (myself) living on terms of social equality with whites.

He had to keep me out of their sight by feeding me alone and sleeping me in a room far from them. In their absence at work in town I used to amuse myself playing on his piano (and I was a fairly good player of classical pieces, those days) and by accident some of the boarders came in before I had finished playing, and were surprised at my accomplishment, and desired to get me back to the piano as I hurriedly left the lounge to avoid their sight.

They began to implore Mr Booth to get me back, but I stood on my pride and refused to oblige them, retaliating now with the colour bar on my side, being then still youngish and not as peaceful and conciliatory as I now am in my 69th year.

After that I lost touch till I learnt he had passed away. That is all I know and remember about him, forty years ago.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) D.D.T. Jabavu

N.B. To your queries iii & iv my reply is, No. I have answered i & ii as above,

D.D.T.J.

APPENDIX J<sub>1</sub>

A petition prepared by J. Booth and Peter Nyambo  
CO417/556, PRO, London

A N A P P E A L

f r o m

The Natives of Nyassaland, Barotsiland and Matabeleland  
(now known as Rhodesia, North and South)

a n d f r o m

other British Subjects endorsing the same

T O H I S M A J E S T Y

K I N G G E O R G E T H E F I F T H

O F G R E A T B R I T A I N A N D I R E L A N D ,

together with His Ministers, Executive Officers and Council,

A S A L S O

to all Honorable God-fearing persons in Great Britain and  
Ireland

## - C O N C E R N I N G -

The British African Territories, now known as Southern Rhodesia,  
Northern Rhodesia and the Nyassaland Protectorate.

W I T N E S S E T H that

1. WHEREAS, during the past 30 years it has pleased the Government of Great Britain, on philanthropic and other grounds, to take possession of the above-named territories without giving any public or definite pledge as to the manifest rights and future status of the numerous native owners found in the possession thereof;
2. AND WHEREAS, it has become customary to parcel out, sell, grant, and otherwise alienate such lands, treating the right of native ownership throughout these vast and valuable regions as extinguished, or of negligible importance;
3. AND WHEREAS, by reason of native non-acquaintance with the methods and laws of modern Europeans, and by reason of the native people of Africa having a disposition to rest trust in the honorable intent of educated white men, such native owners have hitherto, for the most part, passively acquiesced;

4. AND WHEREAS numerous Natives of Nyassaland, of North and South Rhodesia, and of the regions beyond and around them, have now visited and sojourned in the parts of South Africa where Europeans abound, and where their rule is most firmly established, and have thereby become acquainted with the conditions of life and the treatment of Natives when completely under the power of the British Government as now established in South Africa, and find the conditions to be so intolerable and burdensome, even to those born in the midst thereof, as to make native life on a peaceful basis wellnigh impossible by reason of ejection from homesteads, by refusal of right to retain or acquire land by purchase, by harassing passlaws and constant imprisonments of travelling Natives, or if found without employment, by new proposals of compulsory segregation, by heavy taxation without native representation, by policy traps and "black peril" terrors, and in many other ways of giving effect to a policy based on racial enmity and oppression;

5. AND WHEREAS large numbers, if not all the Natives in the British

Territories first named, as well as those of regions adjacent- wherein, all told, the Natives count to several thousands to every European - after prolonged consideration, deliberately prefer death as freemen, to life and loss of land and liberty to the extent they now find that British rule, when fully established, as in South Africa, openly permits, without rebuke, under the Union Government of South Africa, whilst the Colonial Officials, or Executive, disclaim responsibility or of remedy;

6. AND WHEREAS we find that even Englishmen who desire the just treatment of Natives are in imminent danger of being hunted and expelled from Nyassaland without trial, and are refused the right of re-entry, on pain of arrest and imprisonment or death - one English Missionary having been openly so treated, contrary to the will and wish of all native residents, against which we hereby record our protest and appeal for redress;

7. AND WHEREAS, finally, it is our earnest desire, as also the desire of the vast majority of the Native population in the

territories specified, to live in a state of peace and mutual goodwill with each other and with the white races, and to secure for all civilised people of whatever race, an honorable place, on equal terms, in our great but

undeveloped Fatherland, that we may conjointly "Subdue and replenish the earth" as God first commanded men to do.

W H E R E F O R E,

We, your petitioners do urgently and respectfully request your Majesty's Government, which still retains full responsibility for, and complete control of, the vast regions herein particularised, to take such immediate and decisive steps as will ensure the preservation of the land and the properties, as well as the speedy uplifting and education, on an equal basis with the British Settler, of the entire native population, and that to this end, from the close of the current year, 1914, Your Majesty's Government will see to it THAT ALL REVENUE derived from the said Territories, and their development, from any and every source, shall be administered in equal amounts and in just proportions for the educational, political, and other benefits of Natives and Europeans alike, within the said territories, and under the exclusive supreme control of the British Home Government, and that educated civilised Natives, as they become available in any part of British African Dominions, shall have equality of representation upon the Legislative Councils, and in the Assemblies in the respective Territories, and be fully eligible for official posts of trust, administrative financial, military and otherwise, subject to the same tests of fitness as those applied to British Official and other servants, and that in purely Native, or unadvanced districts, Native Advisory Councils shall be established for the purpose of promoting harmonious co-operation between the Native peoples and their Administrators in matters relating to the peace and well-being of the Native and White populations.

YOUR PETITIONERS WILL EVER PRAY long may King George the Fifth, grandson of the Gracious and Ever Glorious QUEEN VICTORIA, reign to worthily protect and rule with even handed justice and kingly care, His White, His African, His Indian, and all other subjects, by the Grace, Favor and Power of God.

APPENDIX J<sub>2</sub>

A copy of an original letter from John Chilembwe to Joseph Booth, kindly supplied by Prof. Emeritus G.A. Shepperson

PROVIDENCE INDUSTRIAL MISSION,  
CHIRADZULO,  
BLANTYRE.

6. 11. 1911  
Prof. J. Booth.

Dear Father:-

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your <sup>kind & thoughtful letter</sup> letter dated 1st Oct 1911, and to state that I am appreciated most highly for your loving remembrance. I am assure you, that you will not know how happy I was when I received your letter and to note that you are the one who sent us an English syllable roll. Indeed it is very helpful to us. Regarding your kind invitation I thank you most heartily, but regret to say that I am unable to fulfil for reason that I am almost over whelmed by most important duty to perform, I am busy making bricks as our old Chapel is too small to hold our Christian congregation, therefore they Church devoted herself to build a large church. As to be understood you are aiming

2

that we should work to gether by changing Sunday into Sabbath day. Further - what profit can a man get on Sunday or on Sabbath, are both days essential to the salvation of the souls of truth you have said. Certainly the truth of God will not part us for all the work I am doing and my life is partied to your Crown. For Joseph Booth's father as the people call it is still living in S. C. Africa. But as the changing of the day is the question of the future. I wish if I could see you tomorrow I try to accommodate you in your important request. Dear Papa Booth think not that I am unkind to you, you have my sympathy in all your suffering. I know you are God's fearing man, and as long as God living we are to gether. Desiring that God's blessing may rest upon you and successful dignify your effort. I am Father.

Yours very Dear Son in  
Christ,  
John. Chiblewe

APPENDIX K<sub>1</sub>

Joseph Booth printed both letters on a leaflet to advertise speaking appointments

(kindly provided by Prof. Emeritus G.H. Shepperson)

## COMMENDATIONS

[COPY.]

HOODS,  
STRAND, W.C.,

LONDON FEDERATION OF BROTHER-  
37, NORFOLK STREET,  
July 27th,

1916.

TO THE BROTHERHOOD SECRETARIES, &c.

This serves to introduce Mr Joseph BOOTH, who is over here as the appointed Representative of the BRITISH AFRICAN CONGRESS, with its Headquarters in Johannesburg. He is seeking an opportunity to expound the African question.

The object of the Congress is to solve the Race Question in British Africa, and make our occupation, on the basis of "Equal Rights," one of partnership, rather than, as at present, that of usurpers, in the estimation of the more advanced Africans.

Yours fraternally,  
(Signed) J. McINTOSH,  
B.R.,  
Hon. Secretary.

APPENDIX K<sub>2</sub>

FROM Mr. SOLOMON PLAATJI, OF KIMBERLEY, S.A., DELEGATE FOR THE AFRICAN NATIVE NATIONAL CONGRESS.

33, ALFRED ROAD,  
ACTON  
LONDON, W.,  
18/7/16.

DEAR MR BOOTH,

I must tell you that I am happy to find ... that you are in old England, pleading as hard as ever for the forlorn cause of the much misunderstood African. Besides the Colenso family, I cannot remember any white person who has fought so doggedly in the thankless cause of our ignorant, despised race, as you have consistently done. I have very often asked myself what encouragement or satisfaction you can hope to get for all the discomfort that I know you have had to endure, for the sake of our Race, which is helplessly ignorant, and too fettered to lend any tangible or material support.

I have read the Preamble and plan of your Association, formed at Johannesburg, while I was here (in England), and I find it accurately represents the aspirations of the Africans. We claim no monopoly of any part of Africa, and while others are warring for "a place in the Sun," our only prayer is that in our own Continent of Africa the British Government should treat us as well as the Foreigner. Surely no unprejudiced reasoner could misconstrue this into a desire to usurp other people's prerogatives.

I am posting you my Book, pleading for the Natives of South Africa, which, as you know, does not represent your Continent-wide experience. It only deals with the conditions in that huge Black Man's prison, which is officially and diplomatically styled "the Union" of South Africa, &c.

Yours faithfully,  
(Signed) Solomon Plaatji.

## APPENDIX L

**A Report on the deportation of Joseph Booth from Southern Africa in 1915. CO525/68, PRO, London, p.416**

Confidential

**COPY FROM:-** High Commissioner, Cape Town  
**TO:-** His Excellency the Governor, Zomba.,  
**DATED:-** 19th October, 1915.

Sir.-

I have the honour to refer to your Confidential despatch of May 25th last with regard to the case of Joseph Booth.

In view of this man's antecedents, I directed the issue of an Order for his expulsion from Basutoland, and he consequently left that territory and returned to the Union. The Union Government however came to the conclusion that his continued presence in South Africa would constitute a public danger which could not be averted otherwise than by his removal oversea. They accordingly decided, after it had been ascertained from the Secretary of State that there would be no objection to his presence in the United Kingdom (where he was born), to offer him an assisted passage to England. This offer was accepted, and Booth, accompanied by his wife, left Cape Town for England on October 2nd.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant.,

(Signed) Buxton.

High Commissioner

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

### PRIMARY SOURCES

#### i) Manuscripts

Joseph Booth's Apologia of 1919, available in manuscript form under: Anti-Slavery Papers Mss. Brit. Emp. S 18 C154 1-9 at Rhodes House Library, Oxford. Photocopies are also preserved by the EURL, Shepperson Collection, Edinburgh.

Joseph Booth, MIZPAH - Mss 2504, Shepperson Collection, EURL, Edinburgh.

The Diary of Edward J. Booth, 1891, Mss 2504, Shepperson Collection, EURL, Edinburgh.

Mrs H.B. Bonner, Mss 3022 (Bishopsgate) London. Also Mss 2350; Mss 2214 and Mss 3020.

Harry Langworthy's manuscripts of Booth's Biography not yet published. I was kindly provided with several copies for evaluation.

#### ii) Public Record Office Documents and Parliamentary Papers, House of Lords, London.

a) Chilembwe Rising - CO525/61

b) Colonial Office Despatches, Correspondence and Commissions of Inquiry.

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- c) Defence of the Realm Act, 1914 (House of Lords), Defence of the Realm Act, 1914, Regulation 14B - H.O.45/10690/-228849 (PRO).
- d) Joseph Booth Files (1914-1915), Basotho Government Archives S 3/10/5/8.

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